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ABSTRACT

In 1972 Islander children in the Torres Strait Islands were receiving an education designed for children of the dominant white society in Queensland. Observation and interviews with parents (36), teachers (28), and others (14) revealed that adult Islanders valued but did not understand the white education that was culturally inappropriate for their children. Classes were taught with dated methodology (rote memorization) and, although the Islanders spoke native dialects and Pidgin, were entirely in English in order to prepare students for entering the dominant society. Elementary schools, administered by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs rather than the Education Department of Queensland, existed on the islands. However, students could only complete their schooling by correspondence or by attending one of two island secondary schools. Elementary principals ("government teachers") had to meet no special training or competence standards. Elementary teachers generally had an elementary education, 50% had no teacher training, and all received poor pay. The better-trained secondary teachers had an annual turnover rate of 70%-80%. Recommendations included recognizing the distinctive learning needs of Islander children, adding adult education, changing the language and method of education, improving secondary education, and improving teacher training and staffing requirements. (SB)

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EDUCATION IN THE TORRES STRAIT:
PERSPECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT

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PREAMBLE

The Resources Survey of the Torres Stait, as conceived and directed by Mr E.K. Fisk of the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, has a twofold purpose. It is intended to render an accurate account of the present situation, and to offer suggestions for possible development of the natural and human resources of the region. In this report on education, we have therefore not restricted ourselves to what is currently going on in schools on the islands. Rather, we have tried to look at formal education in the context of the whole life of the region, and to consider ways it which it might, starting from its present base, be expanded or improved in order to serve the interests of the younger generation of Islanders. Adult education has been largely omitted from the range of our enquiry for lack of time and resource.

The material is presented under five general topics, a chapter to each: primary school curriculum, language, secondary schooling, teachers and administration. In each case we have begun with a description of some of the key features of the present situation as we see them, and followed this with a list of alternative policies which might be adopted. It has been our considered stance that we have not been required to produce a set of solutions. Rather we have been asked to offer reasonable alternatives, so that those who make decisions will have sound information on which to base their choice. We have therefore been at some pains to suggest alternative courses of action and to clarify the advantages and disadvantages of each. Policies which are alternative to one another have a common first digit (e.g. 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). The order in which such alternatives are listed is one of logic, not of our preference. On a few matters, we see no alternative to a particular course of action. In order to make reference to these recommendations easier, a full list of policies is given at the end of the report.

The statement which follows is based upon a period of some four weeks of field research in the Torres Strait, conducted in November-December, 1972. We promised our informants anonymity. But it may be of some help to the reader to know that the majority of our material was derived from our own observations on Badu, Yorke, Murray and Thursday Islands, and from interviews with thirty-six parents, twenty-eight teachers and fourteen other persons (a few of whom knew the situation in other parts of the Strait).

The thrust of the report inevitably reflects our own conception of the nature of the educative process and its proper function in society. No viable statement on social phenomena can avoid bias. As a counter to such bias, there are two correctives. One is that already explained - the

setting down, on most of the major issues, of alternative policies. The second corrective is offered here in a brief statement of some of the assumptions underlying the report, assumptions which, though we believe them to be well-grounded, we have not taken space in this report to expound and defend. These then are some of the more important assumptions underlying this report:

(1) That the Torres Strait Islands are going to continue to be part of Australia, and that mobility into mainland society is a desired alternative for the Islanders.

(2) That education is properly concerned with a number of goals, in particular with providing the basis for

a) a satisfying and enriched personal life;
b) communal awareness and responsible participation in society's affairs;
c) vocational training;

and that none of these should be pursued to the exclusion of any other.

(3) That there is no one optimum stance for the teacher (e.g. authoritarian, permissive), but that the good teacher always works towards the goal of making himself redundant in the pupil's life.

(4) That teaching is a learned vocation, and should be undertaken only by those who have had an extensive education and a thorough training.

For the rest, it is perhaps proper to say only that, though we have no desire to usurp the role of the decision-makers, they have our goodwill. If some of our comments on the contemporary situation seem harsh, they are not so out of any malice towards those who have been responsible until the present for the administration of the region. All Australians must share in some measure responsibility for policies which have forced those who have worked among the indigenous peoples of this country to do so with grossly inadequate resources. We rejoice that this climate is changing, and hopefully commit this our little straw to the wind.

K.R.O.
Townsville

A.W.
Bathurst

August, 1973

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As is usual with an investigation of this nature quite as much depends upon the co-operative goodwill of a large number of people in the field as it does upon the insight and diligence of the researchers. We have been greeted with a consistent willingness to be investigated much greater than any outsider has a right to expect. Since we have given an undertaking to preserve as far as is practicable the anonymity of our informants, we cannot name here the majority of those who have co-operated with us. But we would like to refer in particular to:

Mr Robin Yarrow, of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, for ready permission to visit the reserves and assistance with transport, communications and accommodation.

The school principals and their wives on Badu and Murray Islands and the chairman (together with Miss Rebecca Nai) on Yorke Island for willing hospitality.

The principals and teaching staff of the primary schools on Badu, Murray and Yorke and of the state high school and D.A.I.A. hostel on Thursday Island for patient and helpful reception of our enquiries.

The parents, churchmen, community leaders and others who answered our questions with courtesy and helpfulness.

As is customary and proper, we absolve them of all responsibility for the errors we have perpetrated and the misconceptions we are perpetuating in this report.

CHAPTER I

CURRICULUM AND CONTEXT

The general impression one gets about island primary schools is that they are attempting to offer standard Queensland schooling to Islander children whose digestion of the white man's educational diet ranges from gastronomical delight for the very few through mild forms of dyspepsia for some to chronic and often acute indigestion for many. Yet there is a paradox here for, although the educational diet appears to be unsuitable for Islander children, consumer resistance to it is negligible. Parents place great store by education for effecting their children's entry into the good life of white society. Some see it as almost a form of magic and defer to their children accordingly when they return home to the island from high school to demonstrate that sloth is a virtue. That these youngsters have not yet carved zogo shrines for themselves in the citadels of white power does not deter parents from wanting more education for their children and better educated and trained Islander teachers to assist the government teachers in performing the educational trick. One government teacher who was aware that parents see educational magic in schooling made the comment that as long as he got the children into school and let them out again at the right times and they came to school regularly and happily, the parents would think he was a good teacher and provided good education for their children, irrespective of what they did in school.*

There is undoubtedly widespread ignorance among parents of what schooling today entails, of how well their children are doing at school, of how they might assist their children to learn. True there are many white Australian parents who share the Islanders' ignorance; but the latter have no sense of awareness that they should be involved and do not know how to find out about these matters. There is an appearance of confidence in the benevolence of D.A.I.A. over matters educational for would not the provider of their medical aid, social service benefits, inter-island transport, also provide for their children's educational needs and even the anticipated good job at the end of it all?

These then are some of the dimensions of the problem which is primary schooling in the Torres Strait Islands.

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*This teacher himself was judged a good teacher by the patriarch of that island's most powerful family - because he started and finished school at the right times.

Children of quite different ethnic and cultural origins from those of the white society in which they live, albeit of necessity, are being fed the knowledge, values, attitudes of an alien culture and are experiencing considerable learning difficulties as a result. Insufficient recognition is being given to their home environment and its cultural norms in the school learning process as well as to the need for these children to become not only intelligent employable citizens but also mature persons unashamed of their origins.

Two questions are at issue here, the learner and the school curriculum. Although they are dependent upon each other, they will be discussed as two distinct topics in this chapter.

A. The Learner

The Present Situation. At the heart of school education is the learner, a human person with a range of needs and abilities which the school must capitalise upon if he is to have a full, happy life. His success or failure at school is an accident of birth, not only in terms of the genetic potential for which he can only hold his forebears to blame but also in terms of the cultural circumstances of his delivery. If the child happens to be born into white middle class Australia it is more than likely that he will identify with the school easily and match the expectations of verbal fluency, reading and number readiness, psychomotor co-ordination and certain kinds of approved personal and social behaviour which the school holds for him. But what if the accident of the child's birth left him, without fortune, neither white nor middle class? Acknowledged research opinion is that he may not learn satisfactorily in school and will more often than not be branded as a failure. Children who are in this unfortunate position are often referred to by educationists as culturally disadvantaged.

Torres Strait Islanders fall into this category. It is necessary to add that labelling an Islander child "culturally disadvantaged" does not imply a value judgement that he is disadvantaged because his culture is inferior to that of European Australia. It is rather an assessment of a present situation - the European culture is one which for better or worse occupies the seat of power. To be educated, an Islander child must acquire a basic facility in it, an understanding of its terms and a command of its techniques. Since his life experience outside the school does very little to give him this basic facility, he is at a disadvantage. Consequently his motivations to learn in the school situation are significantly different from those of white children for whom current Queensland primary schooling was devised.

The customary sources of motivation to academic achievement for middle class Australian children of European descent are the need for recognised achievement, the desire to

meet community and home expectations, and career aspirations. We suspect that these motivations have little relationship to schooling for Islander children living in villages where the shady tree by the beach provides the repose necessary after having put off until tomorrow what wasn't done today; where jobs are as scarce as trochus shell at the Island Industries Board store during "dirty water time".

However we do have evidence which suggests that the need for approval by adults and peer group members significant to the child is an important source of motivation for him. In a subsequent chapter on the secondary school we point out that the peer group ranks highest among adolescents; however for the primary school child the need to be approved of by parents and teachers seems crucial. The child most likely to be approved of by teachers at present would be he who achieves almost as well as an average white child in his school work; so most Islander children are currently excluded from this kind of approval.

Parents are the surer source for all children. While enduring the customary delays of island time one evening prior to an exhibition of men's island dancing, we saw older women beating out dance rhythms for young boys who voluntarily leapt into the arena to participate and were roundly applauded for any efforts they made to learn the aggressive body movements of Miriam dance. Yet parents are unaware that they can help their children to learn better at school by these means. Rarely do they discuss their children's progress with the teachers (and then only if the teacher tells them their children are high achievers). They do not come near the school and we suspect do not discuss schooling with their children.

Taking Islander children as a group of learners with special learning difficulties the following alternative policies warrant consideration by educational policy makers.

POLICY 1.1

That Islander children be recognised as having distinctive learning needs and motivations which require identification by intensive research and treatment by modified teaching strategies.

The rationale for this policy is implicit in the foregoing discussion. In sharp contrast to the substantial accumulation of research findings currently available about Aborigines and their special needs as learners, little is known about Torres Strait Islanders. If pre-schools and primary schools in the islands are to be capable of giving children an opportunity to succeed in their schooling, curriculum planners and teachers must be reliably informed about their special learning needs and motivations.

A useful model for research in the area of learner motivation is Havighurst's "Model of the Evaluation of the

Human Reward-Punishment System", the basic proposition of which is that human learning is influenced by a variety of rewards which are themselves arranged in a culturally based reward-punishment system which is learned. [1]

The major objection to this proposal would be the time and money taken in conducting the research and developing special learning programmes for Islanders. Indeed developments in Aboriginal education bear out this objection. Nevertheless the field work has been done for Aborigines and a number of research instruments are likely to be available for adaptation in gathering Island data. The task is likely to be simpler with Islanders, because they live in villages and are easier to find.

POLICY 1.2

That suitable teaching-learning programmes and techniques found useful among other ethnic minority groups be adapted for use with Islander children and adopted on the basis of how effective they are in practice.

As an alternative policy, this one complements Policy 1.1 in that it aims to meet the special learning difficulties of Islander children immediately. It depends upon enlightened professionals for its success and so has implications for the training of teachers for island schools. The advisory teachers, who from 1973 will be aiding Islander teachers to do a better job, would be in a position to supervise the implementation of such practical experiments and to refer the results back to the central education authority who could turn the data over to curriculum experts for the restructuring of programmes.

The Watts-Gallacher Report on curriculum and teaching methods suitable for use in Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory [2] provides a ready illustration of how this policy could be applied in practice. In the section on school organisation, that report recommends an ungraded structure for the infant school followed by streaming for the rest of primary schooling into general and upper streams. To transfer these recommendations directly to the Torres Strait Islands situation one would have to agree with their assumptions. We consider that ungrading as a form of school organisation has something to offer as it allows for differential rates of learning progress and flexible groupings for particular learning situations. One could imagine an island primary school as one great room of learning something like an open plan classroom with different teachers handling the different learning activities. The ideas on ungrading therefore could be fertile ones for Island schools.*

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*A form of non-grading was tried in a primary school on Thursday Island for a year or two about a decade ago. We have not been able to find an assessment of its effects.

We are in basic disagreement however with the assumption behind the Watts-Gallacher streaming recommendation. Does any population of children naturally break itself up into two groups? Can we speak of some general conditions called achieving or under-achieving, or is this not rather meaningful only for particular subjects? If a child gets locked into one of these groups at age seven or eight it is less than likely that he will have his individual learning needs satisfactorily catered for. He may be held back in one area where his development would permit him to shoot ahead with a spurt whereas in another he may long for the respite of a slower pace. We therefore doubt very much whether this recommendation is appropriate for the Torres Strait.

Another difficulty which would be faced if Policy 1.2 were adopted relates to selection and evaluation of programmes. U.N.E.S.C.O. offices have over the past two decades compiled substantial files of material of this kind. But discriminating selection from this extensive offering and adaptation to the island situation depends upon the activity of persons whose knowledge of the local situation is on the one hand immediate and on the other expertly discriminating. We know of no person presently working in the Strait region who combines these qualities in sufficient measure.*

B. The Curriculum and its Implementation

The Present Situation. The school day in island primary schools begins as it does in all Queensland primary schools with a military-style parade, expressions of loyalty to God, Queen and country, rounded off with a quick march into school. Once in their class areas the children go through the routines and practise the learning behaviours their teachers set for them. By and large they experience traditional chalk-and-talk teaching very reminiscent of the old Scholarship Examination days prior to 1962. At that time Queensland primary teachers saw their professional role in terms of covering the prescribed syllabuses, requiring memorisation of material from prescribed textbooks for examination purposes. While the winds of change are blowing through schools on the mainland, island schools are still in those memorisation-bound doldrums.

For example, teachers still rigidly adhere to syllabus content. The English syllabus for one is treated as though it contains a set of instructions for turning out grammarians rather than children who are proficient in oral and written communication, reading, and creative verse, prose, and drama. It is totally incongruous that drama is absent from the school programmes we observed, given the tradition of stylised body movements to convey legends which characterise island dancing in the villages where the school children grow up. At its

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*A compromise solution would be to appoint a research officer for the purposes outlined below under Policy 2.3, and to give him a double charge, i.e. curriculum and teaching.

extreme the teaching of English has become a shirking of responsibility on the teacher's part for deciding how to teach a language skill in favour of going through those motions demanded by the English textbook. The whole issue of language teaching is of considerable importance and will be dealt with in the second chapter.

Nor is the teaching of the Mathematics, Social Studies and Science syllabuses exempt from this same criticism. The learning of mathematics resembles the learning of lines for a play which will never be performed, for the children rarely get the opportunity to apply their basic skills to practical situations in an island environment. In Social Studies not only is the textbook the teacher but also it is a 1952 model suffering seriously from built-in obsolescence. Some teachers are aware that a new Social Studies syllabus has been available since 1971 but show little real understanding of its methodology. Science (when taught) again adheres to syllabus content and directives although here and there an excursion takes the place of chalk-and-talk.

One is tempted to conclude from all this that ill-educated and untrained Islander teachers present the major reason for it. Yet those blessed with a modicum of training teach in much the same way - as indeed do their white superiors.

This is to be expected, given the tendency of Queensland teacher training institutions to turn out teachers in the likeness of those legendary practitioners from times of yore. The result is a constant discouragement of the inventive spirit - a pressure which is reinforced by the physical facilities of the schools.

Unpartitioned class areas do nothing to diminish the noise nuisance from one class to another. At almost every moment of the day the staccato rhythm of a teacher's voice or the chanting of class responses can be heard clearly and irritatingly in other class areas. Quiet concentration is impossible under these conditions so that it is reasonable to expect teachers to seek a refuge for uninterrupted learning by taking their classes into a shady spot in the school playground.

Even so, teachers make little use of the local environment as a source of stimulating material in their teaching. Their attitude seems to be that the only environment which children can learn in is that found within the four walls of the school building. It is therefore no wonder that children see little connection between what they learn in school and what the physical, social and cultural environments present to them outside the school. In fact there are few concessions given to singing, craft work, story telling and writing. Local people are rarely called upon to assist in the teaching of traditional stories or crafts to island youngsters. One variation in this general pattern was observed on Murray Island where twice a week each class has lessons in Miriam, the local

language. It is taught by Islander teachers using a grammatical and etymological approach and it appeared to capture the children's interest. Something similar has been undertaken on Mabuiag, by a missionary linguist.

Chalk-and-talk teaching is encouraged in island classrooms by straight rows of desks all facing the blackboard. Given the small size of class areas and the unwieldiness of desks and chairs (forms in some instances) it would be difficult to arrange a class area for a group and differentiated teaching activities or to provide open space for drama, oral expression or discussion activities without a major upheaval in the class area next door.*

In the wake of the winds of change in mainland schools have come school libraries. No longer are these seen as repositories for physical weaklings, book worms and classical English novels. Today they are recognised as rich sources of learning for children equipped with the necessary reference skills, and stores of imaginative delight for all children no matter what their reading tastes. Sketches of this mainland library picture are found in island schools. A range of children's literature was observed, splashed with colourful illustrations and good sized print, in those schools where the government teacher valued reading as a source of imaginative stimulus and language development for island youngsters. Not so in others where the teachers themselves do little reading and are unfamiliar with the means for extracting information from a book. Library books are also available for adults in the form of library boxes of sixty books each, which circulate throughout the island groups. They are housed in the school usually and are available for both children and adults to borrow. A glance at the record of borrowings indicates few Islanders avail themselves of this service.

Pre-schools are also conducted on each island in separate and suitably equipped buildings, The teaching we saw in these schools was thoroughly kindergarten in orientation with plenty of activity work for the development of psycho-motor and social skills, together with ample opportunities for the children to be creative in paint, plasticine, paper, sand and blocks. The teachers have been given a one-year kindercraft course in Brisbane and generally seek inspiration from The Guide Book for Kindergarten Teachers. The bright-eyed enthusiasm with which the children engaged in their activities spoke for the vitality of these women as teachers of young children. It contrasted markedly with the passive absorption of whatever inert knowledge seeped through to Islander minds in the primary classes which followed. It seemed almost as though the pre-schools were preparing children for some other, more enjoyable learning experiences than those which were in fact to be their lot.

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*Exceptions to this criticism are those islands where new, light, individual tables and chairs have been recently supplied.

POLICY 2.1

That curriculum and teaching methods in island schools be kept as they are with no accommodation to the special needs of the island situation.

This policy can be justified on a number of grounds. Firstly it is in line with the Australian Government's policy of assimilation for island people into white society. This policy implies that, as Australian citizens, Islander children should be given equal educational rights with other Australians and have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and vocationally. They should therefore not be given any different educational treatment from that of other Australians. There is however a fallacy in assuming that the only method of carrying through an assimilation policy is by uniformity of educational provision throughout the country. There are many alternative forms which might be more appropriate to achieving the end of assimilation than that stated in this policy: for example the United States government sponsored Operation Headstart for negro pre-schoolers as part of its programme of assimilation; or in Israel where the assimilation of migrant children is being effected by special courses, notably in language development. Our own recommendations on language development and culture-relevant curricula offer at least two alternative forms of education for assimilation in the Torres Strait context.

Another supporting argument for this policy is that as Torres Strait Islanders constitute a minute ethnic minority their culture does not count for much when compared with that of mainland European society. Their education therefore should induct them into that society and take only minimal account of their own culture in their own and society's best interests.

The implications of this policy for Islander children are that the language of instruction and much of the context and emphasis on abstract patterns of thought will continue to be foreign to them and raise considerable barriers to achievement.

POLICY 2.2

That the present curriculum and teaching methods be basically retained,but with some modification of content by using examples from the local situation.

The rationale for this policy is that the aims and objectives of standard Queensland education might be better achieved with Islanders if their interest could be captured by references to a familiar environment. A classic example of this approach was the Torres Strait Reader Books 1 and 2 published in 1928 for use in primary schools. These readers deliberately modified personal and place names in stories to Islander usage: the three billy goats gruff lived on Waiben Island. A large proportion of the stories were Island legends.

But by the 1940s the pupils in the schools were considered to have improved their levels of achievement sufficiently to allow for these to be replaced by the standard Queensland readers.

The closest present day approach to this scheme is the occasional use of the Minenda Readers from Papua-New Guinea. Teachers who have used the Miranda scheme report that children are more responsive to it; however Happy Venture Books with their stories of Dick and Dora playing cricket in the park continue to be the more common fare.* Reading is but one curriculum area which can be made relevant and meaningful to learners by enrichment with local content. Other suitable areas are language development, art and craft, music and dancing, social studies, science and mathematics.

POLICY 2.3

That a completely new curriculum be designed taking the local environment as its starting point.

This policy begins with the child as he is and where he is. It does not deplore his lack of urban experience or his ignorance of a mechanised way of life. It accepts the context of his present life as providing the raw material out of which the curriculum is to be fashioned - entirely for the first two or three grades, partially for later years. It is based upon a number of educational principles which emphasise the value of moving from the known to the unknown, of beginning with the present experience of the learner, of building new knowledge on the base of knowledge already acquired, of encouraging the child to seek for meaning in all that he experiences.

The classic example of such a curriculum model is the Gandhian scheme of Basic Education. The fundamental contention of the Gandhians was that the physical, social and cultural environments of the village in which the child lived provided adequate and appropriate content for all his early learnings. Number exercises, language drills, understanding of the properties of water or the nature of plant growth, poetry and mime and music ... all these and more could, given imaginative teaching, arise naturally and directly out of the life of the village. Theory was constantly required to follow observation, never to precede it. Books became means of extending horizons further than, and of interpreting, the village scene, not a substitute for immediate and constant reflection on it. The school was to be not an instrument for cultural alienation, but a centre for intelligent awareness of the dimensions of village life and, in time, creative renewal of it. Good basic schools aroused in their pupils a high level

*The van Leer Project offers useful guidelines on the factors which need to be kept in mind in selecting suitable material. Here, as elsewhere, it needs however to be emphasised that material developed for use with Aboriginal children may be as unsuitable in content as that developed for other Australians [3].

of interest in their work, interest which depended on the nature of the task being performed and not on extrinsic stimuli.

Translated to the Torres Strait, such a programme would bring the children frequently out of the classroom. The physical environment of the island would provide material for mensuration exercises and lessons on fish spawning and plant structure, on tidal variation and the phases of the moon, on rocks and storms and insects. The social environment would provide material for learning about personal roles and family structure, about currency and marketing, about employment and government. The cultural environment would provide legends and songs and dances to help the child to give meaning in words and music and movement to the feelings which lie deep within his being, and to link those feelings with the accumulated experience of his race and kindred. Such a programme would call for a new set of textbooks along the lines of the Minenda series. Indeed, much of the Minenda material would probably be suitable with minor adaptation.

This policy differs more fundamentally from Policy 2.2 than may at first be evident. The object of that one was to wave a carrot occasionally before the donkey's nose in order to arouse his interest in the work in hand. This one says that the work in hand can in fact be satisfactorily completed on a diet of carrots.

The advantages of such a policy are fairly evident in the description above. School experience is no longer something new and alien, but a continuation in greater depth of pre-school experience. There is no sense of learning being cut off from life, and it therefore presents far fewer problems of apprehension, since it is continually related to everyday experience, and is reinforced by such experience. Parents no longer need to view the school as a place of unfathomable mystery, since the things learned in school will all have relevance to the affairs of island life.

There is one possible criticism of this proposal. It might be argued that Islander children go to school in order to be acculturated to the white man's world, in order to learn about a whole host of things which do not in any form occur on an island in the Torres Strait. It is not appropriate to cut Islander children off from awareness of a wider world. The answer is in two parts. The first is that no such negative intention is present, since learning which begins with the immediate environment constantly leads beyond it. Fisheries and pearling have brought men of many nations to the area: the geography of their coming and the history of their activity in the region open wide doors for learning. The tides are a function of lunar activity, and man is currently getting to know the moon. The point of this approach to curriculum building is that it does not begin with a systematised set of useful knowledge, but with the place where the child is. Its

appearance to the outsider is unsystematic: to the child who is learning, there is constant meaningfulness and relatedness. The second part of the answer is that we see the secondary school as having the major responsibility for enabling the Islander to move into urban mainland society. It is the function of the primary school to introduce him to learning, but to do it in terms which begin always with the place that he knows.

If Policy 2.3 were adopted, it would call for a programme which involved both the writing of new syllabuses and the retraining of teachers capable of putting them into effect: to attempt the former without the latter would be to ensure failure. So a great deal of the value of the suggestions made in this chapter is directly conditional on policies adopted on teacher recruitment and training (Chapter IV).*

Given then a prior commitment to a thorough programme of teacher training, curriculum reform could be undertaken along these lines. A research officer could be appointed for a two-year term, and based on James Cook University.** He would work in close co-operation with those responsible for teacher training, with the supervisory and inspectorial staff in the Strait, with the Faculty of Education and the Aboriginal Studies Committee at James Cook University.

POLICY 3.1

That whatever reforms in curriculum and teaching methods are made they be extended to include the education of adults for their personal development and their role in assisting their children to learn.

The rationale for this policy is that adult Islanders should be given every opportunity to live full useful lives in their villages as more and more of village life becomes influenced by white man's technology and life styles. Furthermore their children need their support in attempting to learn at school. We have reason to believe that little support is forthcoming at present. For example children have little opportunity to practice English language behaviours learnt at

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*These policy alternatives have of course implications for teacher selection and training. For example Policy 2.1 as enunciated would almost certainly rule out the adoption of Policy 7.1

**A person with sufficient expertise could probably be recruited at a salary of $10,000 p.a. plus a travelling allowance.

school. Village life does not demand the practice of mathematical skills or call upon problem solving to come up with the answers. Some form of adult education using indigenous role models could help parents do the right thing by their children. And in time, with some reduction of the high wall of partition between school and Village, parents with special skills (say, in fish-spawning or basket-weaving) might be brought into the school on an occasional basis to instruct.

An objection to this policy is the likely reluctance of parents to participate in an adult learning programme. This difficulty was overcome in getting a privately-run pre-school for indigenous children off the ground on Thursday Island by an enlightened Islander parent who fully understood the value of the pre-school. She made it her business to go around and talk to the parents at regular intervals, gently persuading them to bring their children along to the pre-school. We have no doubt that there are similar people enthusiastic about adult education living on the islands.

It has been claimed above that it is the function of the primary school to introduce the child to learning in terms which begin with the place that he knows. In those terms, it is necessary also to consider the language in which he begins formal learning. This is a large issue and will therefore be treated in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING

The Present Situation

English has been given pride of place as the language of education for nearly a century. Nominally, it is the exclusive medium of teaching. An earlier generation of teachers even tried to impose it on children when they were out of the classroom: it was a school offence to speak anything but English in the playground, and on some islands a civil offence to do so in the village street. English was the language of Christianity and of civilisation, and its wider use was a measure of the extent to which the Torres Strait Islands had abandoned the dark days of savagery for light and learning.

A very considerable effort is made to make the present generation of children literate and (to a lesser extent) fluent in English. The standard Queensland primary school timetable is nominally followed in the schools, and it allocates for Grades 4-7 from 25% to 30% of the school day to English language development. (In view of the backwardness of the children in the Island schools, at least one principal extends this time, replacing periods set down for Science and Social Studies with further time for language drills.) This teaching varies from unimaginative repetition of words written on the blackboard by the teacher to stimulating sessions in which the children read their own stories on to tape and have them played back to the class. By and large however the teaching of language skills in the schools is less than good. Part of this may be attributed to the lack of proficiency of the majority of the Islander teachers in the language they are teaching. For example on one island we visited, and this maybe taken as typical, at least two out of the six Islander teachers interviewed experienced difficulty in conversing adequately with us in English. Part may be attributed to the lack of teacher training of many of these men and women. Part may be attributed to the unimaginative methods which, at least until very recently, were recommended to students attending training colleges run by the Queensland Education Department. In consequence, drama is rarely used, though we saw several examples of the children's natural aptitude. There were some excellent puppets being made: in the one performance we saw, a tape-recording was used of a white Australian telling the story. Most Islanders have a keenly developed sense of rhythm: yet verse speaking seems only occasionally to be practised. Most crucially, the topics set for composition are customarily on pictures from textbooks about life in Brisbane or Birdsville; or the teacher's essay is copied by all the children into their pads so that they all have a series of pieces of model English on record. This serves to reinforce for the child the awareness he has that English is the key to the wider world of the mainland. But it is also likely to ensure that it remain

a largely unused key because the forms of its customary usage are too far beyond the compass of his own experience. We shall have more to say about teacher training in a later section of this report. For the moment, it is apposite to take note of the languages with which the child is familiar before he comes to school.

There are two distinct languages in the Islands: Eastern Islander and Western Islander. These differ radically, as much as, say, English and Hungarian or English and Japanese, though each is known, confusingly enough for the European, as Langgus. There are minor dialectical differences within Western Islander, though these are trivial.* Any Islander who speaks Western Langgus has no difficulty at all in understanding any other [4]. The extent of use varies from one island to another. It is generally true to say that the older generation uses Langgus more exclusively, and that Strait Pidgin, or Ap-ne-Ap as it is locally known, is more commonly spoken by children. In virtually all cases of communication with Islanders from the other language area, Pidgin is used. On Mabuiag, children have been observed to use Langgus when playing with one another; but as the imaginative context of the game moves away from Island culture, they tend to abandon it - as, for example, when re-enacting a scene from an English film, which they do in Ap-ne-Ap.

This illustrates a feature of Pidgin languages found in other places like New Guinea. The closer the person moves to the white man's culture, the more readily he uses Pidgin. And of course as soon as there is a call for communication outside of the group of language speakers, Pidgin is used. For these two reasons it is more widely used at Bamaga and is virtually universal on Thursday Island.

Fluent to some degree in one or more of these languages, the child comes to school, and faces the demand that he use the foreign tongue which is the language of education. The dimensions of that demand, and its implications for his subsequent school career, need to be spelt out.

The Process of Becoming Literate

One of the first things that a child has to learn when he begins formal education is to read. It is likely to be one of the most crucial processes of his entire time in school,

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Eastern	Western		
	Central	Far Western	Near Western
Murray	Yam	Saibai	St. Paul's
Darnley	Yorke	Dauan	Kubin
Stephen	Sue	Boigu	Badu
	Coconut		Mabuiag

since upon its success will depend not only his capacity to learn a number of other subjects but also his attitude to the very business of learning itself. If the sight of the symbols which constitute the alphabet becomes associated with frustration and confusion, then all subsequent learning which depends upon reading or writing will be constantly hindered. If a child begins his school career in this unsatisfactory fashion his chances of achieving his potential in virtually every subject in the curriculum are impaired since they depend upon his facility in reading, and the confident ease with which he approaches written material.

It is worthwhile then to consider in a little detail some of the elements in the process of becoming literate. When the Australian child of English-speaking parents learns to speak, he identifies a certain set of sounds [haʊs] with an object. When the teacher introduces him to reading, he is taught to make an identification between the object (a building in which people live) and the set of sounds he has learned to use and a set of symbols which are written on the blackboard: h-o-u-s-e. And likewise with words denoting actions and qualities. Consider now the situation of the child whose mother tongue is not English - say Eastern Islander. He has learned that a building in which people live is referred to as [mɛtʰʌ]. When he comes to school, he is shown a picture of such a structure and told that it it is a [haʊs] and that the symbols which signify it are h-o-u-s-e. If he is very intelligent and very well taught, he may be able to recognise that "house" is what a European lives in and "meta" is what a Murray Islander lives in. If he was already completely fluent in both languages before he came to school, he may be able to accept literacy as a manipulation of the English language (which he may infer is inapplicable to the Eastern Islander language). But the chances are very high that he will have difficulty linking the sound and the symbol because neither is really rooted in his mental image of a building people live in. That example is of course an excessively simple one, and not many children of normal intelligence would have great difficulty with a concept as tangible and common as a house. Competence in language however depends upon the manipulation of a range of concepts many times more elusive than buildings - individual and communal emotions, actions tinged with shades of approval and disapproval, modifiers of subtle complexity reflecting socially established responses.

Something of the problem has been recognised by educators in various parts of the world for some time. A number of experiments have been conducted in the use of the vernacular as the means of making the child literate. Two of these are especially appropriate to the present discussion, one in the Iloilo Province of the Philippines and one in the Highlands of Chiapas in Mexico.

Since the Philippines passed from Spanish to American control at the turn of the present century, English has been the language of education. It was in 1948 that the

superintendent of schools in Iloilo Province, began a carefully controlled experiment in the use of the local vernacular, Hiligaynon, in the early grades of the primary school. Seven elementary schools in the experimental group were carefully paired with seven in the control group so that one in each group was in Iloilo City, three in a farming district and three in a fishing district. Likewise, within each of the latter districts, schools in each group were representative of poor, average and wealthy economic levels. Teachers for each were equated on the basis of educational qualifications, experience and teaching efficiency. Pupils likewise were matched on a number of measurable scales. Teaching then proceeded, from Grade 1, for the experimental group in Hiligaynon and for the control group in English. Equivalent tests in the two languages covered arithmetical processes, reading and social studies. The results on these tests at the end of each of the first two years showed to a statistically significant level "that the local vernacular, Hiligaynon, is a much more effective medium of instruction in the first two primary grades than English" [5]. From the beginning of the third year of the experiment, English was used as the medium of instruction in both groups. Testing in this case took place half way through the school year. The results showed that the experimental groups were still significantly superior in arithmetic and, remarkably, slightly better (though not to a level considered statistically significant) in language and reading Not only so, but this result held for reading in English i.e. the experimental group came up to an almost equivalent level of competence after six months study of English to that of the control group after two and a half years of it. Teacher and parent assessments of other aspects of pupil development were collected to supplement the test results. Children in control classes were rated consistently average on the application of instruction to their personal lives: towards better health, enthusiasm for attendance at school and similar measures, while the children who had been learning in Hiligaynon were with very few exceptions rated above average [6].

A more recent confirmation of the fundamental finding of the Iloilo study comes from Mexico. Government schools have been following the centuries-old policy of teaching in Spanish. A number of bilingual school programmes have been sponsored by the Summer Institute of Linguistics among Indian communities in the Highlands of Chiapas. In these the children spend only one year in learning to read and write their own language, and in introduction to Spanish, before going on to the regular Spanish medium government schools. In 1967, Nancy Modiano of New York University conducted a comparative study of the Spanish comprehension of two groups of Tzotzil and Tzeltal children - one group having attended the bilingual schools and one having attended the all-Spanish State schools. The crux of her conclusions was:

> "The text scores, like the proportions, favoured the bilingual Institute schools at beyond the .001 level of probability .... Thus we see that a significantly

greater proportion of students in the bilingual Institute school read with significantly greater comprehension in the national language." [7]

In discussing this, Modiano proposed three factors which might account for the results:

(1) The nature of the reading act is important. "Learning to read in a foreign language is far more difficult and confusing than learning to read in one already known. Youngsters who first learn to read in their mother tongue approach reading in a second strengthened by their existing skills." [7]

(2) Attitudes towards reading in a second language greatly influence pupils' perception. If the learning of a second language is approached through the mother tongue, it becomes more culturally meaningful, more intrinsically desirable and less frustrating, and therefore easier.

(3) The teachers' ability to communicate meaningfully with their students played a crucial role in the latter's academic achievement. Although the Institute teachers were generally educated to a much lower level than the State school teachers, and had an inferior command of Spanish, they were much more fully cognisant of the nuances of the local cultures [8].

It is not surprising to learn that several countries which face the problems of education in a multi-lingual society have taken cognisance of this kind of evidence. The Philippines has until 1972 continued to use English as the medium of instruction in the upper grades of the primary school and thereafter. But the children are made literate in the first two years of the primary school in their mother tongue, and during that time are introduced to English. Indonesia's national language is spoken as a first language by only a small minority of its citizens. For all the rest, schooling begins in the mother tongue, and Indonesian is introduced as a foreign language after initial literacy has been attained. The transition to Indonesian as the medium of learning takes place at the beginning of Standard IV, and it is used exclusively thereafter.

A few thoughtful observers of the Torres Strait scene recognise the problem (though none to whom we spoke were aware of the research evidence from other places). One of the most educated of the Islander clergy commented that the first year at school was a crucial one, and that children might cope with it more adequately if they were learning in Islander Language or (since it is a common language throughout the Islands) Strait Pidgin. Several of the clergy in fact use Pidgin in order to get their teaching across when taking Religious Instruction in the schools, though English is standard for both liturgy and sermon

in church. Another priest told us that an Australian teacher of some years ago had learned to speak the local Islander tongue, and had been very effective with the children in the school because of this.

Another piece of relevant evidence came from an experienced white informant who had once taught in the primary school on St. Paul's. (The school there was a mission foundation and was therefore not under the direct supervision of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.) Teachers taught Grade 1 in Pidgin for the first six months and in a mixture of English and Pidgin for the remainder of the year. In Grade 2 some Pidgin was also used, though English became the predominant medium by the latter part of the year. An inspector of the Queensland Education Department made a general inspection in 1970, and was later asked in a casual fashion for his assessment of the reading of this group of children, by then in Grade 4. He said that they were the best he had heard anywhere in the Islands.

Other comments on the language issue all accepted the inevitability of English, though with varying degrees of frustration. In spite of the official policy that it be the only medium of instruction in the school, many Islander teachers surreptitiously use Pidgin and even Islander language to get their point across to the children, especially when attempts to do so in English, on matters of fact or exhortation, evidently fail to communicate. Some in the junior grades say that this occurs up to 50% of the time. In one case we know of, an Islander teacher takes his problems not to his white principal but to an Islander colleague. He does this because he can then converse in Pidgin, and be more confident that he is getting his point across and understanding the answer.

It is hard to be sure just what is the current opinion among Islanders on the language of learning. We asked a number of Murray Islanders, and they all gave English as their first choice with Eastern Islander included in the curriculum. But this finding has very limited validity. Indeed any attempt to establish opinion on such a topic undertaken by a researcher who was not himself fluent in the non-English languages of the area, would be likely to produce seriously biased results. In very general terms, we incline to the opinion that the school (along with the Church and the Medical Aid Post and the D.A.I.A.) is seen as a part of the "civilised era", which is universally desired. English language is a difficult but essential concomitant of that way of life which must somehow be mastered, no matter how painful the process. Any proposal such as the one we are about to offer, to modify current practice, would have to be clearly shown to be with the intention of the long term strengthening of the command of English language, not its replacement. Though this consequence might not become evident immediately, we believe in the light of evidence from elsewhere that it would prove itself within a few years.

Possible Policies

Given that the Islands remain under the control of Australia, there is no reason to think that English will not remain the official and national language of the area. It will also be the language of higher education, and of entry into the life of the mainland for those who wish to emigrate as it will be of those who have done so for some years and then return to their native place. The effective teaching of English must therefore continue to be one of the major responsibilities of Island primary schools.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that the effective teaching of English is not the only responsibility of these schools. It is equally important that the children become competently numerate, soundly informed about the world of nature and the world of men in which they live, clearly conscious of the dual heritage of Islander and Western cultures which is theirs. And it is of possibly greater importance that they also learn to face life with a questing confidence, with a willingness to find out, with an assurance that no problems that face them need remain intractably mysterious since the vast resources of human learning are available to all who will read. We doubt that this is happening to the great majority of the children in the Island schools at present, and it well may be that the present language policy is a crucial factor in this failure.

The alternative policies which may be adopted are:

POLICY 4.1

That the children be initially taught in the Islander Language of their area.
We consider an optimum programme would be

Pre-school:	Islander only
Grade I:	Islander only
Grades II & III:	Instruction in Islander, but English taught as a foreign language
Grades IV and subsequent:	English medium

The basic rationale for this has already been offered in the accounts of extensive experiment in other places. In detail, it would allow for the child to make the transition to a school environment (the Pre-school year) entirely in the language of the home, and then to cope with the next hurdle of his education, that of becoming literate, without having to cope with a foreign language. He would begin learning English in Grade II, and transfer to its exclusive use from the beginning of Grade IV, by which time it is reasonable to expect a modest but sufficient competence. The teaching of English would draw much more heavily than at present on techniques for the learning of a foreign language. There is ample material available in this area from Migrant Education authorities and the University of

Sydney's courses on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, though of course some of the content would need to be modified to deal with fishing nets and luggers rather than Friday shopping and lay-bys.

The adjustments which such a change would involve are:

a) the printing of literacy and some other teaching materials in two Island languages.*

b) the training (or retraining) of all teachers of Grades 2 and 3 in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Its disadvantages are twofold. The cost of the publication programme would be proportionately greater than is customary with school materials, since the number of children in each language group is restricted. However, neither the extent nor the complexity of such material would be very great since only the first three grades are involved. For reasons outlined above, we consider such an outlay would certainly pay substantial dividends at higher levels of education. The other disadvantage would be some restriction of mobility of Islander teachers for Pre-school and Grades I-III.**

POLICY 4.2

That the children be initially taught in Pidgin. The optimum programme would follow the same pattern as that for Policy 4.1 except that Pidgin would take the place of Islander Language at each level.

The rationale for this course of action is not quite so clear cut, though it stems from the same research evidence cited earlier. Ap-ne-Ap has a substantial admixture of English words and phrases. But in its basic structure and ethos, it is a Melanesian language, so that it is not alien to the children in the sense that English is. Indeed, on Thursday Island it is the universal medium, and it is very common on some of the other islands, notably Yorke, Yam and Darnley. It is everywhere commoner among the younger generation. Many Islanders who use their own language in addressing one another switch to Pidgin when speaking to children.

Its advantages over Policy 4.1 are that the cost of the publishing programme would be cut to something like a half, and that it would place no limit on the transfer of teachers throughout the area.***

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*Most of the basic research has been done in terms of grammar, orthography and the like [9].

**The recommendations of the Watts-McGrath-Tandy Report: Bilingual Education in Schools in Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory (though the report was not yet available to us at the time we completed our final draft) have we understand been in substantially the same direction.

***The extent of such transfer does not appear in any case to be very great. A limited enquiry suggested that, in 1972, there were only two Eastern Islanders teaching outside their language area, and two Western Islanders outside theirs.

There is a considerable amount of prejudice against the use of Pidgin, and some of the more plausible justifications for this opposition need to be examined.

a) Its vocabulary does not embrace the sophistication of technology or human affairs in the wider world.

This is of course a relative judgement which could in some measure be made of all except a very few languages in the world. Like all living languages, Strait Pidgin will rapidly borrow or coin its own terms to cope with these matters if it becomes necessary to do so. In the terms of our present proposal, no such extension would be necessary, since all teaching from Grade IV onwards would be in English.

b) It has no grammar.

This is a judgement which can be made only by the ignorant: all languages follow a system of basic rules - some, like Latin or Arabic, rigorously; some, like English, irregularly and very loosely.

c) Since it contains a fair measure of English words and usages, its encouragement in the school context would lead to the reinforcement of inappropriate language patterns in the use of English. Broken English would tend to replace Standard English.

The experience of all those who have taught English to non-English speakers (including those who have been made literate in English) is that the structures of the mother tongue tend to be manifested in the use of English. [There is no evidence to suggest that this is more likely to happen in a context that acknowledges Pidgin than in one that does not.]

d) Pidgin is a messy hybrid, often excessively earthy, with no decent parentage or grounds for respect.

Such could be said of virtually all the major languages of today's world. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan and one of the twelve recognised languages of India. It has a notable literature which has a wide following among lovers of good poetry throughout the sub-continent. Yet the world "Urdu" itself means "the language of the camp", for it began some thousand or so years ago as a pidgin spoken by the Persian speaking conquerors of North India when conversing with their Hindi-speaking foot-soldiers and camp servants. Nor can English claim very much more elevated origins. For centuries following the Norman Conquest, it was not used by the educated in polite company - not until one Geoffrey Chaucer, having proved himself a competent writer in the fashionable Norman French of the nobility, began to use the common man's English as a vehicle for poetry of superlative pithiness and sensitivity. Snobbery concerning linguistic antecedents is often inadequately grounded. Nor is it an intelligent basis on which to make decisions concerning the educational process. Given time and tolerance, bastards often grow into mature and useful citizens of the world.

We make no claim to linguistic expertise: on this issue we find the arguments of Steven Wurm convincing, and commend his excellent paper "Papua-New Guinea Nationhood: the problem of a national language". [10] Though it is concerned with New Guinea Pidgin in the New Guinea context, its discussion of Pidgin vis-à-vis English is cogent and in every respect applicable to the situation in the Torres Strait. [11]

These ostensible reasons for objecting to the use of either an Islander Language or Pidgin in school are only occasionally the real ones. A very common ground for the protest is the unwillingness of white Australians to learn to speak an alien tongue. If the educational reasons we have outlined are sound, then this would seem to be a minor consideration: schooling is provided for the benefit of the recipients, not for the comfortable employment of the purveyors. In harshly practical terms, it must however be recognised that the supply of white teachers willing to work in the Islands is limited, and that a language requirement might reduce this to negligible proportions. The problem is not however a very large one. The persons who would need to have a full command of Pidgin would be the teachers of the junior grades. These would be Islanders, for whom it is already a lingua franca. If the head teacher is a European and he is to provide the right kind of supervisory stimulus to his staff, he will need to acquire at least a generous smattering. Under the scheme for recruitment and preparation of teachers described elsewhere in this report, there would be opportunity to do this before arriving in the Islands. The only non-Islanders who would need to have more than such a minimal fluency would be advisory teachers and inspectors. It is normally a condition of belonging to a learned profession that one be willing to master such fields of esoteric knowledge as are relevant to the exercise of one's skill. In this case, it seems reasonable to expect these persons to apply themselves to the discipline of becoming fluent in the second medium of education in the region.

POLICY 4.3

That English continue to be the sole medium of instruction in the school.

We find it very hard to offer justifications for pursuing this policy - save that it would be easier to implement, and cost less money.

CHAPTER III

THE WAY INTO THE WIDER WORLD

The Present Situation

Until the end of 1963, there were only primary schools on Thursday Island. In 1964, a secondary department was added to one of the primary schools, and in 1966 this became a separate high school. Its enrolment at that time was 205; there were nine teachers, including the principal. In 1972 the staff was eighteen in number; the enrolment had grown to 240. Of these some 100 or more were from the outer islands: 70 boys were in residence at Torres Strait College, a hostel maintained and staffed by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs at Tamwoy on Thursday Island, and an indefinite number of both boys and girls boarded with relatives. At the beginning of 1973, Torres Strait College was transferred to new buildings at Bamaga which accommodated both boys and girls. The high school at Bamaga opened at the same time with an enrolment of 141, and a staff of eleven.*

In addition to these two high schools in the area, there is the possibility of proceeding beyond Grade 7 by correspondence. A considerable number of Islander children are presently doing this, though again we cannot quote a precise figure. The usual practice is for these students to attend the primary school where they live, and to study under the supervision of the principal of the primary school. Our observation suggests that in some cases of primary schools which have a government teacher (i.e. non Islander) as principal, this means that they spend the school hours sitting at a desk in a generally quiet atmosphere and doing correspondence lessons or, with permission, other approved reading. The principal is sometimes able to call on them for a few minutes and offer to answer questions. Only the especially self-confident normally take advantage of this, and when they do they ask for help with, say, a maths problem, which is sufficiently individual to ensure that they are not open to possible embarrassment in front of their peers. Or the principal may if his timetable permits it teach a lesson. On the islands which do not have white principals, there is likely to be less guidance available, since few Islander teachers have themselves been educated beyond primary level. In any case, this is not a task for which the principal can feel more than a marginal concern. So the children are left to make what they can of material which has been prepared in Brisbane with Queenslanders of European descent

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*Our visit to the region took place before this, and the account of the "present situation" which follows relates only to the situation on Thursday Island. We have received some more recent information on Bamaga at secondhand, and incorporated it where appropriate. It has not however given us cause to question the argumentation offered under "Policies" in this chapter.

in mind.* Some brief discussion with some of these children suggested to us that a great deal of the language used in the instruction notes is not only inapplicable but is also incomprehensible to them. We have doubts also about their comprehension of some of the corrections written on completed and returned exercises.

Learning achievement from correspondence tuition depends to a very large extent on the literary skills of the student - not only his level of comprehension of the written work but his sense of familiar ease with learning from books. For reasons which have been outlined earlier in this report, these are likely to be minimal for Islander children, even those of high intelligence. Achievement depends also on the command of a range of related study skills, which must be applied with very little external stimulus. Only children who have been very well taught in their primary school and who are highly motivated to continue with their education are likely to achieve a measure of success. Motivation for the present generation of Islanders seems to depend upon their parents' rather inchoate sense of the value of secondary education (of which more anon), and upon the generous Commonwealth grant which is payable to all students of Aboriginal or Islander descent who are studying full-time, commonly referred to as ABSEG. In 1973, it was announced that this grant will still be payable to parents of children who are studying by correspondence in their own homes; but the criteria for selection have not been available to us at the time of writing. For our part, we do not regard correspondence as a viable alternative for Islander children - their level of competence with and confidence in the English language alone makes the likelihood of successful achievement negligible. Even experienced correspondence teachers agree that as a method of learning it is appropriate only when there is no secondary school available. So this chapter will from this point concentrate on the present and potential provision of places in high schools.

The State High School on Thursday Island offers a standard general course at Grade 8, with the exception of those for whom a foreign language (French) is considered too difficult. For these, extra periods are allotted to English, Maths and other subjects. Grades 9 and 10 are each divided into six courses: general academic, commercial, technical, homecraft (all assuming standard academic performance), presently containing between 30% and 36% of the pupils at that level; and modified commercial, homecraft and technical courses taken by the remaining two-thirds or so of the pupils.** The range of

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*For example, this piece of exhortation in the section on Spoken English: "You may think there is no need to study this since it comes naturally to us in a country where English is spoken, but how many of us really speak in such a way that we communicate efficiently and effectively?"

**It is necessary in interpreting these figures to keep in mind that the number of Islander children in the modified stream is much greater proportionally than their total enrolment. In other words, many more proportionally of the non-Islander students find their way into the academic stream than do Islanders.

subjects offered within these alternatives is, for the size of the school, generous. Equipment likewise, is, except for the library, good.

These are two directions in which courses are modified. One of these is the creative adaptation of teaching material to take account of the life-experience of the students. One English teacher has virtually written his own text-books of comprehension and language material, using the local environment as his sources. This uses a great deal of duplicating stationery, which has been readily supplied. It also uses not only a considerable slice of the teacher's time and personal energy, but also his understanding of the region. Not surprisingly, that teacher has been on the staff for three years. Such a creative modification would be largely impossible for a teacher in his first year in the Torres Strait. Similar modification has been attempted by another teacher with Social Studies courses; in that case, the experiment came to an end when the teacher concerned found himself the following year without Social Studies on his timetable.*

Other things that could be done to give a sense of achievement, and to rouse interest through the use of material which is clearly related to the slice of life already known, are not done. Art could be an especially appropriate offering in a region with a distinctive indigenous tradition. But the present regulation requires a total school enrolment of 500 pupils before an art teacher is appointed. Music likewise could (given a teacher willing to draw on the magnificent musical tradition of the region) be a very stimulating addition to the curriculum. And of course teachers could be recruited on the clear understanding that such an imaginative pedagogy was expected, and rewarded - in some way other than by an early transfer south!

The other way in which courses are modified, and the one particularly intended by the use of the term in the description above of the school's offerings, is by the reduction of demand for academic achievement. Islander children achieve on an average lower levels than do those of other racial groups; and among Islanders, those who come from primary schools on the outer islands achieve lower levels than those who have attended the primary school on Thursday Island (a school conducted by the

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* Queensland secondary schools suffer enormously from a conception of generalist teachers - apart from the accepted specialisms of art, music, technical, domestic and science subjects, other teachers (especially up to Grade 10) are expected to be competent to teach any subject from English Literature to Geography. This makes for easy transfer of teachers both from one school to another and from one subject to another within the school. It is part of the price paid for building a secondary system in the early years of its expansion on teachers transferred from the primary service.

Education Department and staffed by trained and classified teachers imported from the mainland). This degree of under-achievement can be accounted for in a number of ways. It may be a function of the quality of primary schools on the outer islands. It may be a function of the transition from the island environment to the cosmopolitan culture of Thursday Island - of which we shall have more to say shortly. For the moment, we shall concentrate on aspects of under-achievement which are to be seen within the high school.

It is most evident in English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science - in other words in those subjects which depend most crucially upon literacy and an adequate development of concepts in the early years of school.* Many of them excel in manual arts and handwriting, as well as in sport. Some of the teachers who have been in the school for long enough to have got to grips with these problems have tried by a variety of means to meet these children with something better than a pruning saw applied to the standard syllabus. An English teacher, recognising the crucial importance of encouraging verbal fluency, has tolerated Broken English rather than insisting always on correctitude of form; children in his classes have responded by developing a greater confidence in their capacity to express themselves. Another has waged a campaign against group taunting, the common form of peer sanction for public committment of error. In consequence, his students have shown a much greater readiness to answer aloud in class without intense embarrassment.** Teachers who are patient and gracious will often elicit considerable effort from their students, who are by and large much more concerned to please their mentors than are their counterparts in, say, urban schools on the mainland. The present principal has tried to do a little remedial teaching from time to time; but there is obviously a need for the appointment of at least one or two full-time remedial

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*One experienced teacher of several years' standing has observed some improvement in standards over the past four years. These he considers may be due to:

1. The text book grant of the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme which, though often abused, has helped to make it possible for all students to own text books. The school in 1972 began handling text-books for sale to the students, instead of leaving the matter unsatisfactorily in the hands of the Island Industries Board store.
2. The Radford Scheme has tended to give a regular four-weekly impetus to students, instead of allowing them to get further and further behind schedule.

**The common form of answering, say, the question, "What is the capital of England?" (for those who dared not remain silent) was, "London - no, I lie!" and to strike the mouth. This mechanism, which covered the possibility of error, illustrates the fear of being shamed.

teachers to the staff, preferably as super-numeraries. For the rest, a great deal more could be done if the staff as a whole were in any way competent to the situation. The nature of their incompetence is a topic however for a later chapter.

In the meantime, it is apposite to take note not only of the situation within the school. As every educator knows, the nature of the student's out-of-school regimen will constantly modify the quality of his response within the classroom. Many of the Islander children live with relatives on Thursday Island. Some homes are adequate, others are inadequately serviced and overcrowded. The number of homes in which there is opportunity for quiet evening study is probably small. The boys who have lived in Torres Strait College have of course had a supervised evening preparation time for two hours. At one stage some of the high school staff undertook to give personal assistance with homework problems at the College two nights a week on a voluntary basis, but the scheme did not last. The sum total of these disabilities has led some headmasters to give up insisting on homework, though they have owned this a less than adequate response.

What then do students do with their out-of-school waking hours? Sports facilities on Thursday Island are, by any Australian standards, remarkably inadequate. The high school itself is built on a rocky crag which gives magnificent views of the harbour but insufficient level land for anything bigger than a basketball court. Nor is land readily available anywhere on the island for this purpose, since most is for reasons which are increasingly inexplicable held as a defence reserve by the Commonwealth. Among the townspeople, a basketball club has been very active, and as one of its prime movers has been a member of the staff of the high school, a large percentage of the students have been attracted into joining. The tennis club has been exclusive. Swimming in the sea is not, though broken glass on the sands and sharks in the water serve to deter many. A committee has begun fund-raising for a swimming pool, and government assistance has been promised.

Television has not reached the area. Radio reception on Thursday Island is poor and erratic. That leaves a cinema, three cabarets and sundry pool-rooms. The cabarets are run by hotels, and as such are not nominally available to persons under the age of eighteen years. This legal limit nevertheless gives right of entry to many of the high school students (who are already of this age); and many whom it officially bars use a variety of subterfuges. Whether they get into a cabaret or not, access to liquor seems generally fairly easy, and most secondary school students imbibe generously. However, beer seems to rank well down the list of popularity after nearly all the hard spirits. For those who cannot afford the customary spirits or who cannot get access to them, methylated spirits has become a widely accepted substitute. In the opinion of some

of our informants, meths. has become much more common among Torres Strait College boys possibly because access to liquor as such is not so easy, or because peer group pressures to conformity of behaviour are more constant.* Estimates vary from one informant to another - somewhere between 50% and 90% of all high school students are considered to be regular if not hard drinkers. There is general agreement that the extent of the habit has grown, and has probably reached the point of addiction for a few.

So much for drinking as a leisure time activity. Another is having sexual congress. There is a general permissiveness among adults on Thursday Island, and the youngsters follow the pattern, usually making their first essay about the time of puberty and continuing thereafter according to capacity. Parents on the outer islands constantly raised with us this or associated phenomena (pregnancy and venereal infection) as grounds for not wishing their children to be sent to Thursday Island for secondary education. Thinking that the smoke of alarm might be not proportionally extensive to the fire occasioning it, we went to some pains to discuss the matter with two or three articulate older adolescents. They assured us that girls begin having intercourse at about 14 years and boys at about 15, fairly quickly settling into a frequency which varies according to the individual, but is rarely less than twice a week. As with drinking, peer pressures appear to be considerable, especially at the beginning. Contraceptive knowledge is slight, and only a small minority appear to take any such action. In consequence a sizeable number of the girls at high school have their study programmes interrupted sooner or later by pregnancy. Parents seem ready to accept and care for the babies their daughters produce, though the girl is often required to leave school and find employment at that point in order to provide for the growth in the number of dependents to be fed.

A situation which gives healthy adolescents easy access to liquor and too little outlet for their aggressive energies seems likely to result in outbreaks of sporadic violence. Theft is rare, and destruction of property likewise. But there have been fights between adolescents gangs, both in the streets and at Torres Strait College. The groups involved have virtually always divided themselves on racial or tribal lines - Malays versus Islanders, or Murray Islanders versus Baduans or whoever. And the deliberate attempts of the principal of the college to mix boys from different islands together in the dormitories have been consistently frustrated. In this, it seems that the boys are clearly reflecting the prejudices of their parents.**

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*At least one boy who refused to sample methylated spirits has been held down and had the liquid poured into him by his peers.

**These groupings appear to be more than the customary preference any youngster has for companions he already knows. In our interviews with parents on the outer islands the necessity for their children to mix with others was often raised an an objection to the proposed move to Bamaga, where the proportions of Saibai (who are "wildmen") mainlanders (i.e. Aboriginals and "dirty") and half-castes were likely to be greater.

Parental attitudes to secondary education and its consequences are not as clear cut as they might be. Secondary schooling has become much more readily available than it used to be, thanks to the existence of the hostel for boys on Thursday Island, the ABSEG grants and the possibility of correspondence lessons. Nor is employment easy to find. So a sizeable proportion of adolescent children are remaining at school after completing Grade 7. It is very apparent to us that the nature and content of the curriculum is a complete mystery to Islander parents, even those who are themsevles primary school teachers. There is however a link in their minds between going to high school and being eligible to apply for certain kinds of jobs. Those who go to high school, it was variously suggested to us, might be eligible thereby to become painters, plumbers, welders, clerks, teachers, dentists or doctors; but the levels of schooling appropriate to these various vocations was a matter of considerable confusion. Many parents felt that the children would have to make the choice, though where the children would get the necessary information from they were unclear - perhaps from "the big boss himself" (the Director of the D.A.I.A. in Brisbane), perhaps from their teachers, perhaps from relatives on Thursday Island who appear to know more about these things.

Along with the uncertainty evident in these replies there was an occasional note of disillusionment. This or that boy had stayed at school to the end of Grade 10, and was now back on the island, jobless. Sending him to school had cost the family a great deal (in the years before the ABSEG scheme), and here he was looking for casual work unloading the occasional lugger that called. It is apparent that any scheme which encourages Islander children to stay longer at school needs to be related to vocational opportunity. The present outlook for school leavers is not a cheerful one. A teacher of English had the children in his Grade 10 write letters of enquiry to employers on the mainland regarding apprenticeships and skilled work. Out of a class of twelve, only one or two received replies which indicated even a possibility of acceptance. To develop secondary education without a parallel development in skilled employment will be to store up substantial disillusionment and lay a sure basis for social and political disaffection (as witness, for example, the growth to power of democratically chosen Communism in Kerala during the two decades after Indian independence).

Qualifying for employment, then, is seen by parents as the major goal of secondary education. They also see that being away at secondary school has other effects on their children: they learn to drink and chase the opposite sex much more freely than would be condoned or even possible on the outer islands. And when they come home for vacations they are often unwilling to help with household and gardening chores. Indeed, they seem less interested in the ways of the island. Parents are disturbed by these things, and have here and there revolted, to

the extent of refusing to send their children away from the island to school. By the end of December, 1972, the number of parents who had completed consent forms for their children to go to Bamaga (as planned by D.A.I.A.) was less than half the number estimated, in spite of radio messages to island chairman and subsequent meetings of parents. Indeed, many of the parents we interviewed were pre-occupied with these problems, and in spite of our disclaimers clearly hoped that we might possess sufficient influence with government to have the situation changed. Could the government not set up several high schools on the islands, they asked. Then the children would still be under island discipline until they were old enough to know how to behave themselves in the island way.

Similar evidences of parental insecurity can be found on Thursday Island itself, though most parents there are of course much more accepting in their attitudes towards changing patterns of customary behaviour. Now and then, however, a parent will break through the customary barrier of reticence which cuts them off from communication with white teachers, and come with a plea for help. The youngster has become an undisciplined stranger in his own home. Will the teacher please punish him? This should be recognised for something much more fundamental than a plea that the teacher do the parent's job for him since he is unwilling to do it for himself. It is, albeit most hazily conceived, a recognition that the child's estrangement from his parents is a function of his education, that the school is a medium of cultural alienation, and ought therefore to accept a larger share of responsibility in guiding and directing him to do what is right.

This process of acculturation to the values and norms of the dominant Australian culture begins of course in the primary school. But that degree of acculturation is in greater or lesser measure common to virtually all Islanders, including the older generation, who have all been to primary school. The whole of Islander society has accommodated itself to that degree of cultural change. What the younger generation now face is a further move from the small, tightly knit, clearly defined religious village society of the Islands to the amorphous, mechanised, post-Christian, pluralist society of urban Australia. The secondary school is a major instrument of that transition. The least that can be asked of it by confused and troubled parents is that it be aware of its role and act responsibly towards the young people whom it is moving. Teachers who have only just learned their craft and are practising it for the first time and a principal who is learning to be headmaster for the first time are hardly likely to be able to respond to this complex challenge adequately - a point to which we shall return in the next chapter.

Our information on the situation at Bamaga, since the Torres Strait College transferred there and its high school

opened at the beginning of 1973, is secondhand and sketchy. The major factors which are clearly different are the nature of the settlement and the circumstances of the college. Bamaga is a part of the reserve, and its population is therefore much less racially mixed than Thursday Island's and much less cosmopolitan in behaviour. Liquor is available only on a fairly strictly controlled basis, and is therefore less likely to find its way into the mouths of students. The Torres Strait College occupies handsome new buildings, with adjacent wings for girls and boys. The staff of the college has been expanded in order to cope with the extension of responsibility. It is hard to say to what extent this responsibility is seen positively as an educational opportunity, and to what extent negatively as a matter of restrictive supervision. Some of the high school staff have become involved in weekend sport and evening homework classes at the college.

Keeping in mind, then, the forbidding complexity of the task which is entrusted to the agencies of secondary education in the Torres Strait, we shall now suggest some alternative possibilities for the development of this sector.

POLICY 5.1

Send all Islander children away to the mainland for secondary education, dividing them up into small groups of not more than three or four to a school.

There are a large number of boarding schools which would be willing to take a small group of Islander students. Other students could be boarded with white or Islander families in the larger towns of Queensland.

The advantages of this policy are fairly evident. The students would be forced to make the transition to the majority culture in order to survive. They would learn to understand spoken English readily, they would be continually forced to shed or to hide Islander behaviours in order to win acceptance in their new social environment. Many Islanders are concerned that there have been so few of their people moving into tertiary education. We have been impressed by the skill and confidence of the few we have met who have accomplished this feat. In every case they have had a substantial amount of secondary education in a school on the mainland. The adoption of this policy would force the pace, and ensure that all those who could cope with it did so in a minimum time. The successful products of this system who chose to return to the Islands (as teachers, administrators, technical advisers and the like) would be likely to have a substantial impact on the life of the region, both in their professional roles and as models to the rising generation of children about to leave primary school to follow in their footsteps.

The disadvantages are less immediately evident. Groups of children in other parts of the world who have been put through

this kind of acculturating forcing house have shown a high casualty rate [13]. The successes tend to be impressively competent but few in number. There are too few who have the personal resources to cope with the pace of adjustment. Confusion concerning one's cultural and indeed personal identity (which as has been suggested above afflicts even those Islanders who are at Thursday Island High School) becomes much more marked in a situation where the supports of group continuity and familiar custom are reduced to minimal levels. Only those who already have a very strong self-concept and a high degree of motivation to adjust are likely to ride the high seas of social confusion and personal loneliness without coming to grief. It takes those of us who have never had to face any such anguish an effort of imagination to visualise the demands of such a situation. The reader may be able to conceive the situation if he imagines himself as a child of twelve or thirteen years sent to a boarding school in, say, Greece or the Soviet Union, and expected to achieve a matriculation at the end of five years. There would be the necessity not only to do all one's learning in the foreign tongue, but also to develop and maintain personal relationships in it and to do this with people, both one's elders and one's peers, who constantly expected modification of personal behaviour (right down to mannerisms of gesture and voice inflection) as close as possible to their norms.

Recent evidence on this comes from close to home. Kormilda College has been set up in Darwin as a residential college of full-blood Aboriginal students coming from settlements and missions in the Northern Territory, to enable them to make the transition to high school. They do the last year of the primary school at the college, and then stay on as residents while attending high school or doing non-academic courses in Domestic Science or Manual Training. Sommerlad spent a large portion of 1970 in residence at the college, while taking a series of psychological measures of the students and measuring these against other evidence of adjustment, such as dropout rates, frequency of acts of minor deliquency and the like. She found evidence that the large majority of students were unable to resolve personal conflict concerning their role, and experienced stress which they expressed in a variety of ways. She suggests that the degree of maladjustment is a result of the discontinuity between the cultural expectations of the home and tribe on the one hand and of the college and school on the other, a discontinuity which is too great for all but a very small minority to comprehend and master. Discussing not only her own study, but a number of parallel ones done in other parts of the world with children from tribal environments placed in residential colleges, as well as cognate studies on other similar institutions, Sommerlad has this sober assessment to offer:

> At entry into a total institution, the individual has a conception of himself made possible by certain stable relationships in his home world. It is characteristic of such establishments to strip him of the supports provided by these arrangements and compel to him to undergo a series of deprivations, degradations, and

> humiliations. While many of these may not be great in themselves, they become significant because they occur so frequently and in so many aspects of institutional life - the whole milieu assumes this character. Thus total institutions disrupt and defile precisely those actions that in civil society have the role of attesting to the individual that he has some control over his world - that he is a person with self-determination, autonomy, and freedom of action [12].

It may therefore be doubted whether the returns from such a policy - the polished and sophisticated graduates - are worth the losses - the confused, uprooted men and women living out their lives as cultural half-castes on the margins of both urban and island societies. It is probably inevitable that the process of acculturation which is at the centre of the whole educational enterprise in the Torres Strait will produce some such sad misfits. It should be one of the serious considerations of policy makers to keep the casualty list as small as possible. It may also be doubted if the consequences of such a policy would not be negatively selective for the islands - those most likely to stay on the mainland after leaving school would be the successful, those most likely to return to the Torres Strait would be the dropouts.

POLICY 5.2

Build up the High School on Thursday Island as a full secondary school with courses to Senior, and provide adequate accommodation for all children from the outer islands.

This policy would involve giving the State High School on Thursday Island the role of being a comprehensive high school for the entire region. It would continue to have a multi-racial enrolment, and to reflect the cosmopolitan culture of Thursday Island. The school would be staffed by a selected group of teachers who had all received some special orientation to the problems and opportunities of working in cross-cultural situations (see the chapter on teachers). It would also have an ancillary staff of specialists (see the recommendations at the end of this chapter).

The first change which this would involve from that of the period up to 1972 would be in addition to the high school of Grades 11 and 12. The virtues of this change would be in the provision of living (albeit few) examples of students continuing to higher levels of education. While progression beyond Grade 10 depends at present upon a willingness to face the vast unknown of going away to a mainland town, the proportion who do so is likely to be much below the optimum. The change would also build up the range of qualified specialist teachers

on the staff, and altogether have the effect of raising the academic sights of the Torres Strait community.

The most radical changes from the present situation would however be in the nature of the provision of residential accommodation. There would be colleges for the accommodation of both boys and girls. The wardens of these colleges would be trained educators with a proven capacity for combining pastoral care with discriminating stimulus to personal achievement both in school and out. It is not intended as a reflection on persons who have been involved in supervisory positions in Torres Strait College to say that the thinking behind the planning of this institution in both its Thursday Island and its Bamaga establishments has been grossly inadequate. It is of course necessary to provide beds and showers and food at regular intervals. But the non-material needs of these children are, though of a different order, as great as these. And their adequate provision is crucial to their achievement in school. What is needed, in brief terms, is an imaginative programme which encompasses almost all their waking non-school hours in a range of individual and group activity. This would include opportunities for reading, music making and listening, craftwork, mechanical hobbies, dramatics, dancing, sports and informal games. Programmes for camping on the outer islands during weekends and excursions to mainland cities during long vacations would be initiated. There would be a deliberate concern to provide for both indigenous and European traditions in the choice of programmes of music, craftwork, games and dancing, so that the students participated with enthusiasm and skill in, for example, a range of Islander dances and singing and developed at least a respectful acquaintance with some Western folk and classical traditions.* The hours after school would be spent not as they have tended to be hitherto in hitting a tennis ball with a stick or sitting around with comics and idling on a guitar between interludes of desultory conversation, but with a round of lively and purposeful activity. There would be opportunities for those who wish to read from an adequate and regularly renewed stock of good contemporary fiction; the introvert would have time and place to be quiet and would not be forced into a frighteningly constant round of social interaction with his extravert peers.

The costs of such a change should not be enormous. Certainly, new hostel building would need to include rooms for activities and ground for games, and these would need to be equipped. But there are a range of games which can be played on a small amount of level ground with simple equipment. Good dramatic

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*Staff of the High School observed to us that the only musical tradition which seems to have an immediate hold on the present students is that of rock. It takes most of an hour to get them sufficiently into the flow of Islander music for their participation to be more than hesitant.

performance calls for only a modicum of stage curtaining and a box of discarded clothes for costuming. Some of the mechanical hobbies it is true require a well-tooled workshop; but that already exists at the high school. The major need would be for staff with a small measure of skill and a large one of enthusiasm to conduct these sessions. The staffroom of the high school is an obvious place for recruitment: several of these teachers have already tried to assist with evening programmes at the Torres Strait College on a voluntary basis, and could be much more willing if a well organised and purposeful programme were instituted. There are a number of trained teachers on the staff of the primary school with too little to do with their free time. The wider community of Thursday Island surely contains its erstwhile experts in volley-ball or palm-leaf weaving or choral singing who would be very happy to be invited to give their services. Some individual or small group remedial teaching might well be included. A regular late afternoon or early evening period of activities on weekdays and a generous round at weekends would serve several valuable purposes.

In the first place, it would give the student a chance to explore his own range of talent, and to discover that he has the capacity to excel. One of the most damning consequences of programmes of academic work like those at the present high school is that with the best of intentions it has the practical effect of giving young people a deeply wounding sense of being failures as persons. If the youngster who (because his introduction to English years ago was less skilful than it ought to have been) is constantly failing in all his academic subjects, finds that he can carve admirable pieces, run close in the badminton tournament or win plaudits for his comic roles in one-act plays, he will probably escape the damning consequences of self-loathing; he will not only be a happier and more wholesome person to live with, but he will also produce better academic results. In jargon terms, his self-concept will not be seriously damaged. The psychological need to get drunk would certainly diminish for a considerable number.

The second advantage of such a regimen would be that some of the great welling-up of creative energies which comes with pubescence would be directed to constructive ends. This is not to suggest that if young people are kept busy they will never have time or thought for erotic pastimes.* It is to suggest that they need, for their own education as future marriage mates and parents, to discover something of the range of expression of human sexual energies in the arts and social activity, of the

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*There is a magnificent example of this kind of vacuous wishful thinking in the novel George Brown's Schooldays. The headmaster of a public school which is ridden with homosexual liaisons is talking one day with a visitor, who raises the subject. "Oh dear no, we just don't have any trouble with that kind of thing here. You see, in this school we believe in the three C's - Christianity, cold water and cricket".

extent to which the energies which become freshly available in such abundance at pubescence can be disciplined to building and shaping and beautifying in an enormous number of ways which have nothing to do with coition.* These activities will also give boys and girls a range of opportunities for observing the nature of the behaviour of the opposite sex, for developing an awareness of the subtle varieties of response of the male to the female (and vice versa) in situations which are not too heavily fraught with personal committment - drama and folk-dancing come especially to mind; but any and all of these activities suggested, can, in well-conducted groups, serve this purpose.

A third advantage of such a programme would be in enabling the students to see for themselves the value of both the cultures in which they have a part. An adolescent who has learned to sing appreciatively Islander melodies and folk songs from some of the European traditions is less likely to be swept off his feet by the banalities of mass-produced pop. And, more importantly, he is more likely to be able to take a proper pride in the culture from which he comes, to feel no shame in being an Islander, to be able to meet, with a measure of dignity and confidence, the jibes which will inevitably come his way sooner or later from racist Australians. He will also be able to see that much more lies behind the European cultural tradition than is evident in the slickness of the Hollywood-Madison Avenue product - a discovery which he needs to make for his own protection, as well as for his future role as a citizen of two cultures.

Alongside this programme and dovetailing with both its timetabling demands and its educational purposes, the students may be involved in a range of domestic and maintenance work in the colleges, so that they share responsibility for the well-being of their daily life and maintain a realistic awareness of the customary demands of adult home life.

So much for the programme of activities of the colleges, undertaken conjointly as far as possible. Another less obvious but not less important part of their educational programme would be a counselling service. This would, in co-operation with the high school, provide diagnostic tests for all students on arrival, to be used as a basis for the moderation of teachers' expectations for achievement. It would seek to build up among the staff of both the colleges and the school a discriminating awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students, and seek to devise modifications of their programmes appropriate to these. It would provide, as a matter of course,

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*Kurt Hahn was the best exponent of this theory, and Gordonstoun in his day an excellent example of its success - except that of course it was then a single-sex institution [14].

regular counselling sessions with each resident student, seeking always to promote realistic self-awareness and the acquisition of appropriate personal goals. It would co-operate with the wardens of the colleges in communicating as appropriate with parents or government departments.

If this programme were to be undertaken there would need to be appointed as wardens of the boys' and the girls' colleges persons of proven competence as educators. Salaries would need to be somewhere around the range for high school subject master or deputy principal. It would be necessary also to appoint assistant staff of proven competence, since no warden could hope to organise and maintain the kind of educational programme we have envisaged if his time was fully taken up in supervisory duties. We have in educational thinking moved a long way beyond the notion of a village dame as an appropriate all-purpose primary school principal and teacher. We need now to move beyond the notion that a residential hostel with an educational responsibility can be adequately staffed by well-meaning amateurs.

So much for the changes in provision which the adoption of this policy would involve. It now remains to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the policy. As compared with Policy 5.1 , it would be likely to produce many less personal casualties, since Thursday Island is not nearly as culturally removed from the islands as is any southern Australian town or boarding school. Yet it is, when compared with the homogeneity of virtually any of the outer islands, a cosmopolitan society. Therein lies the crux of this proposal. If one accepts the premise that it is a function of secondary education in the islands to provide a means of transition to the larger Australian society, then a measure of cultural pluralism is appropriate. True enough, the out-of-school programme we have suggested for the colleges will keep the resident students busy for much of their waking hours. But the high school will continue to have a mixed enrolment of Islanders, Europeans and Asians. Church services, picture shows and shops are utterly unsegregated.* So there will be a larger measure of contact with non-Islander modes and mores than would be the case if policies involving more segregation were adopted. We shall now move on to consider such policies.

POLICY 5.3

Build up the High School at Bamaga as a full secondary school with courses to Senior, and provide adequate accommodation for all children from the outer islands.

This is in nearly all respects a parallel policy to the last - a comprehensive high school and a pair of well staffed residential colleges offering an enriching educational programme in out-of-school hours.

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*It is however necessary at this point to record the comment of one observer who considered the general social attitude towards education in the Thursday Island community was negative.

The crucial difference lies in the nature of the social order outside the school. The total population, of Bamaga is about one half that of Thursday Island. It has an admixture of Islanders and Aborigines, but fewer Europeans and virtually no Asians. It is a reserve, so all visitors have to be approved by the D.A.I.A. In sum, it is a much less culturally heterogeneous place. As such it is likely to prove easier to control the extent to which outside manners influence the behaviour of the Islander children who are studying and living there. But there will still be some mixing, since the school will contain Islanders from all over the Strait, as well as Aborigines.

The extent to which it is appropriate to expose these adolescents to cosmopolitan influences is a crucial one in choosing between the alternatives which our proposals offer. On the one hand we have been made keenly aware of the misgivings of parents on the outer islands concerning the extent to which the children who go to Thursday Island to high school are corrupted by the moral climate of that place. They are in effect afraid that detribalisation will automatically result in demoralisation. On the other hand, we have been impressed by the reiterated concern of a senior Islander priest, himself a parent, who deplored the tendency of many Islander parents to try to cut their children off from any outside influence which might modify their customary behaviour. "It is necessary" he said, "that we face the world as it is. We cannot and must not go on trying to shield our children from it".

The fact that Bamaga has an almost entirely indigenous population may relieve the child who goes to school there from the omnipresent feeling that the Europeans always come out on top. He may be able to learn (given of course Social Studies teachers who are themselves aware of it and able to make use of the situation effectively) from a social environment which is in a mediate stage of the development process, being neither as traditional as the outer island nor as mechanised as Thursday Island. On the other hand, the norms of expected achievement in the high school there appear from report to be lower, so the stimulus for the more intellectually able children is less than on Thursday Island.

The alternatives we have set down so far move by stages along a scale of what might be called acculturating pressure. The final alternative now to be proposed makes the least intensive demands.

POLICY 5.4

Set up community high schools on three or four of the islands. Children who attend them will come from the common language area, and will be accommodated in the homes of Islander families.

This policy would involve building a number of small high schools, one each for the eastern islands (possibly on Murray Island), the central group (on, say, Yorke or Yam), the western (perhaps on Badu) and (if politically appropriate) in the northern group (on Boigu or Saibai)*. On the basis of present primary

* A recommendation of this general order was made by a councillor's conference a few years ago to the D.A.I.A. - which is some indication of the extent to which it represents current Islander preference.

school enrolments, it seems reasonable to expect that this would give enrolments of between 70 and 120 per school*. These may be considered just sufficient to justify the appointment of trained specialist staff to cover the basic subjects, and to allow of specialist teachers in, say, domestic science, art, music and physical education to itinerate between schools in the region.

This policy would keep the students closest to the home environment. The villagers on the island where the school was situated would be asked to board students from the neighbouring islands in return for a boarding fee payable as now by the Commonwealth government. They would be expected to act in loco parentis and to administer whatever discipline was appropriate in that area.

The advantages of this policy would be in the fact that the school would be physically closer to the parents who could hope to visit at least once a year, both to see the facilities of the institution and to consult with the staff about their children's academic progress**. They would have greater confidence in sending their children to a secondary school which was culturally as well as geographically close to home. For the people living on the island where the school was, there would be the possibility of programmes of adult education, both in formal academic subjects and in arts and crafts. Ideally, there might be some chance of the school becoming a community school, a centre for the vital renewal of the life of the island, initiating programmes for agricultural development and public health, along the lines of the Philippine Community Schools. Secondary education might come to be seen as relevant to the quality of life on the island. Regrettably, we think this is scarcely feasible in the present situation. For some time to come, the staff of the high schools will need to be non-Islanders, and (even if they were able to overcome the Australian tradition of non-participation in community affairs) they would be very unlikely to be able to cross the cultural barrier. At the very least this would require fluency in Pidgin, and some competence in tropical agriculture or fisheries.

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* This estimate is based upon the following assumptions:
(a) that nearly all children, given the present financial encouragements and the greater emotional securities which such a policy would provide, would stay at school until Grade 10;
(b) that they would therefore spend four years in the high school (though the present system provides for only Grades 8, 9 and 10, very few Islander children move straight through. The commonest pattern is for them to spend an extra year after Grade 7 on the island, either repeating Grade 7 work or taking Grade 8 by correspondence. When they subsequently go to Thursday Island to high school they go into Grade 8).

** The limited evidence available to us suggests that the once-a-year invitation to parents living on Thursday Island to come and meet the teachers is less than adequate for the amount of consultation which the former desire. Some High School headmasters have made it their business to visit the islands, but virtually none of the high school staff have done so.

The major disadvantage of this policy would lie in its failure to broaden horizons sufficiently. There is clear evidence that the old inter-tribal rivalries which once led to wars have their milder manifestations today in suspicion on the part of the older generation and occasional fisticuffs on the part of the younger. Islanders are going to have enough problems coping with the racial prejudice of white Australian society without giving themselves to intertribal squabbles.

The recent history of a number of African nations illustrate something of the grave dangers of failing to counter incipient tribal prejudices with sufficient determination. The country which has done most to act on this through the school system is Tanzania. Julius Nyerere, the president, was himself at one time a teacher. He has developed a scheme which aims to give primary education to all, as a right. But secondary education is an expensive luxury in a poor society and is available to only a select few. From these few will come the future leaders of nearly every segment of Tanzanian society. Accommodation is provided in boarding schools which are situated in every region. But the enrolment is drawn from many regions. So, for example, the high school in Dodoma in the Gogo country has a number of Wahgogo students mixed up with those from Arusha and Iringa and Moshi and elsewhere. A number of Wahgogo boys are away at schools in Arusha and Iringa and the rest. The consequence is that Wahgogo boys will have learned in the classroom and on the sports field and in informal social intercourse to respect the achievement of Wahchagga and Makonde not as rivals at interschool sports, but as peers with whom one has learned to co-operate.

The Torres Strait Islands are not a nation, so there is not a complete parallel. But they will be more adequately educated if Baduans have learned to live next to and respect Murray Islanders rather than regarding them as objects of potential hostility. Such learning is unlikely to be achieved in separated regional high schools.

A second disadvantage lies in the fact that such schools could not hope to offer Grades 11 and 12 - the numbers of children would never justify the appointment of a sufficient range of specialist teachers of Matriculation courses. It is also likely that there would be a reduction in the level of achievement. The Island environment would emphasise approved teenage behaviour, but it would not tend to stimulate the students to feel that high academic achievement was an important goal. And there would be no European and Asian students who at present provide examples of the acceptance of such goals at the Thursday Island High School. Indeed, it might not even be practicable to run alternative academic and modified courses in Grades 9 and 10, in which case there would have to be a choice between an academic programme which left the majority of the children confused and defeated, or a modified programme which failed to stimulate the academically able*.

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* The modified programme for Grades 9 and 10 at Thursday Island High School in 1972 included some two-thirds of <u>all</u> students.

POLICY 6.1

That there be appointed to the Education authority of the region a team of professionally qualified counsellors.

Several of the personal problems which are raised for Islander adolescents as they move from the world of their parents into the world of the European, are constant, and they can at times become acute. Many of them could be surmounted without serious damage if there were adequate expert counselling available both for the young people themselves and for their parents and teachers. This could be provided by a team which included at least a clinical psychologist and a social worker. To this might perhaps be added an educationist with expertise in vocational guidance: this latter decision would have to depend upon what advisory teachers and inspectors were already employed and what were the limits of their authority. We are presently recommending a group of persons, each having professional competence in his own area but sharing a more than casual knowledge of cultural anthropology, who would work together deliberately as a team. They would aim to counsel students, parents, teachers and administrators, so that each person involved in the educational process became more aware of the nature of the difficulties before them and of means of overcoming them. This would require them to spend most of their time at Thursday Island and Bamaga but also to pay visits at intervals to the outer islands in order to meet parents, island leaders and students who have recently left school. Initially, this would apply to secondary school students only, since the problems of emotional and cultural dislocation are much more acute at that level. In the light of the experience gained, it might well be found appropriate to extend the range of these services. If so, further appointments would be necessary. The kind of pastoral responsibility envisaged could not be exercised if the one team were expected to service all the children at school in the area.

Such an expensive innovation needs justification. Given an improvement in the quality of the teachers available (see the next chapter), some of the serious problems of under-achievement referred to above would diminish. But it is important to recognise that a sizeable measure of a student's capacity to learn is a function not of his mastery of the skills of literacy and numeracy or of the competence of those who have been his teachers, but of his own assurance as a person. It is a serious fallacy sometimes entertained by educators and administrators, that if only all the conditions for satisfactory learning are provided within the school, learning will take place. Our investigations lead us to infer that the present generation of secondary school students are seriously hindered by personal frustrations and that their parents are utterly ignorant of how they may offer any kind of support. A team of competent persons, of the kind being recommended here, could do a great deal to replace confusion with understanding and frustration with a sense of confident purposefulness.

Many Israeli schools have large migrant populations of Sephardi Jews who have come recently from North African and Asian cultures. Such schools are normally provided as part of their staff allocation with one specialist teacher of the backward and one specialist teacher of the emotionally maladjusted, as well as one teacher who can take children on an individual basis for sessions of counselling and remedial teaching. There are in addition itinerant psychologists who travel around the schools and have especially difficult cases referred to them. Neither the situation nor the need is an exact parallel with that in the Torres Strait. But it is an example of the provision of specialist services as a means of facilitating the teaching functions of the school. And it may also be noted in passing that it occurs in a country with a substantially smaller G.N.P. than Australia's.

CHAPTER IV

THOSE WHO TEACH

Primary Teachers

The Present Situation. Of the fourteen Torres Strait Islands with schools administered by D.A.I.A. only five have principals of European descent. These islands are not necessarily those with the largest populations. These white principals (otherwise known as government teachers) are assisted by a number of islander teachers of various standards of education, teacher training and professional competence. Our overall impression of the activities of this teaching team was one of a struggle to keep up the appearance that standard Queensland schooling was being conducted, but somewhat in the fashion of the monitorial school system of the nineteenth century. Under this system the teacher directed what learning would be undertaken and how it would be taught, to monitor teachers, who, not being of the same quality as himself, could not be trusted and had to be carefully supervised to ensure a proper imitation of his teaching behaviour.

It was hard to infer what criteria had been used in selecting government teachers. Those we interviewed displayed no special characteristics of person or background to suggest why it was that they got the jobs ahead of all other applicants, Each was your standard Queensland teacher who appeared to have shown by his previous professional behaviour that he was not likely to run amok by suggesting that schooling for an ethnic minority ought to be in any wise different from that for Australians of Anglo-Saxon descent. Not all had been head teachers before; but they were married men, with wives capable of running the island's Medical Aid Post. We wondered even whether this might not be the crucial selection criterion, especially as one teacher had his two year term extended by one year for the sole reason that his wife was a triple-certificated sister and was of great value to the medical welfare of the area.

Once selected for the job the government teacher proceeds to his new post as he would take up any other school appointment on transfer. Hence he needs no special training for his new task and only a minimal orientation to island living (detailed in Chapter V below) together with a careful warning not to fraternise with Islanders beyond the normal call of duty. Undoubtedly this advice has saved many a government teacher from "going troppo", which (one inferred) manifested itself variously in drinking heavily, fraternising with native persons of both sexes, and even on occasion wearing Islander dress.

D.A.I.A. has adopted a policy of a two-year term for government teachers in island schools. This policy has come in for criticism from the teachers themselves and some churchmen. The consensus of their views is that two years is too short a time. The government teachers feel that they are really only beginning to understand the Islander mind when it is time for them to move out. As a consequence, we believe, they tend not to see their stay in terms of planning and carrying through long term educational policies and probably have no vision of the school doing any more than it does in any other part of Queensland. One clergyman sees an accentuation of this problem, if the Queensland Education Department were at some time in the future to assume administrative control of island schools - given its propensity for frequent transfer of teachers based on what appear to be administrative rather than educational reasons.

At best the government teacher displays a professional competence comparable with that of a head teacher of a similar-sized Queensland school. He manages the affairs and correspondence connected with D.A.I.A. and the school, as well as performing such extra-curricular tasks as manning the island airstrip and driving the official tractor. He sometimes attempts to develop culture-relevant teaching materials and assists his staff with teaching methods. However sources of suitable educational ideas for these teachers are scarce. One or two have contacts in mainland schools who occasionally dispatch work programmes and duplicated teaching material. But not a great deal reaches beyond the standard mediocrity which has characterised Queensland primary schooling.

At worst the government teacher preys on Islander teachers' factual and methodological errors and generally shows poor rapport with them to the extent that the staff do not have morning tea together and young teachers in need of guidance prefer to confide in their older colleagues who are Islanders. Added to this is an attitude of disdain for Islanders who do not perform well. This is usually manifested in a lack of confidence in the ability of Islander teachers to show initiative or reliability. One government teacher was particularly harsh in his criticism of Islander teachers. Not a little measure of racial prejudice was in evidence; or perhaps his professional dignity was offended by their lack of response to his earnest attempts at inservice training - the older nodding off to sleep while the younger did not even have the decency to cover their mouths when yawning. Yet this teacher was surprised when he was told of his younger teachers' Island dancing abilities and certainly did not suspect their usefulness in developing culture-relevant learning programmes. The lack of rapport which government teachers have with Islander teachers may be a particular example of the extent to which the constant counsels against fraternisation from D.A.I.A. hinder the betterment of teaching standards on the islands.

Perhaps a more obvious example is that of the teacher-parent relationship in the educative process. It is well known among educationists that a teacher's knowledge of the child's home circumstances and the parent's understanding of their roles are crucial variables in enriching a child's educational achievements. Yet government teachers have little contact with parents outside official requirements such as enrolments and the odd encounter at a Parents' and Citizens' Association meeting or at the school. Their Islander subordinates on the other hand are frequently mixing with parents in the village but are unaware of how to exploit their advantage.

Islander teachers do not enjoy the same professional status as government teachers. Their salaries are commensurate with their standards of education and training, which for young teachers means that they are on a par with that paid to island school janitors. Most teachers we interviewed had only been educated to island primary school standard and approximately one-half had received some form of teaching training. The usual method of appointment is for a recommendation to be made to D.A.I.A. by the principal and the island chairman on the basis of a vacancy and the appointee's educational and personal suitability. Without any pre-service teacher training and with usually a serious lack of facility in English, they are appointed to schools to teach what is often difficult and strange material in a foreign tongue.

Probably the biggest problems faced by young teachers is that they know little about what education and teaching entails; that their life experiences are limited; and that their command of subject matter is poor. They usually face the prospect of a lengthy period in one island school, maybe after an initial transfer or two. Islander teachers gain few opportunities to travel. One would not quarrel with the argument that school janitors, turtle farmers or I.I.B. store assistants have no need to leave their island occasionally to broaden their perspectives for the sake of doing a better job on their return. But a teacher's very capacity to educate depends upon his knowledge of the world which he must mediate to the children. His teaching will be as narrow as his awareness.

Training for those primary school teachers who have any, takes the form of a one or two year course at Kedron Park Teachers' College, Brisbane, and annual Christmas vacation seminars on Thursday Island*.

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* Some of the older generation of teachers did receive a type of pre-service training from an enlightened government teacher on Mabuiag Island prior to World War II. It emphasised proficiency in the subject matter to be taught and teaching methods.

Selection for the Brisbane course is usually based on the recommendations of the lecturer-in-charge and the D.A.I.A. Manager on Thursday Island after referral to the island Chairman and Director of D.A.I.A. for approval*. Currently the number selected is limited to ten per year, with preferably equal numbers of males and females.

In 1973 no first year training will be given as some one year trained teachers will be sent for their second year. At this rate of training, we could be looking into the twenty-first century before even the present contingent of Islander teachers is minimally trained. All this in a period when the standards of teacher training accepted in mainland Australia are rising rapidly.

Attendance at the Thursday Island seminars is voluntary (but essential for any teachers who hope subsequently to be sent for training in Brisbane). The government teacher does not attend these seminars; but even if he wished to he might be deterred by the D.A.I.A. requirement that either he or his wife must be on the island at all times during his term of appointment. Islander teachers speak encouragingly about the seminars as sources of new ideas (few have any others) and an opportunity to exchange fellowship with their distant colleagues. However they are critical of the short duration of the course (resulting in too many potted lectures) and would like the opportunity to engage in practice teaching with some form of follow-up evaluation. The shortage of practice teaching opportunities in the Brisbane course also came in for criticism.

The popular description of Islanders always makes mention of their ability to imitate. It is given credibility in the teaching behaviours of Islanderteachers. Their teaching styles represent an eclectic epitome of all that has been drummed into them by succeeding government teachers and experienced Islanders and displays a particular leaning towards the current government teacher's approach. They are conscious of their inferior professional status vis-a-vis the government teacher and in relying heavily upon him for their teaching cues and directions rarely initiate or innovate. Our assessments of these teachers suggested to us that their quality as persons was their strongest recommendation, but that their enthusiasm for the job and

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*Allowing for the need to include proper proportions of Easter and Western Islanders and to recognise the status of older teachers in Islander society, the usual criteria for selecting trainees seem to be thoughtfulness, capacity to ask questions, evident interest and a modicum of basic knowledge. The trainee's personal determination to become a teacher also carries weight. Any systematic basis which this listing may appear to have is due to the present context. We have gleaned these from interviews with most of the officials concerned, who have analysed their evidently impressionistic judgements at our request.

confidence in it were markedly inferior. They have personal talents which as yet remain untapped as sources of educational value for the children they teach. This was brought home to us at the end-of-year concerts in which young Islander teachers participated in and led children in island dancing and singing. They showed a lively rapport with Islander children which the government teachers generally lack and which if exploited through teacher training and culture-relevant curricula could do much to ease the youngsters into the learnings requisite for life in mainland society and the retention of a cultural identity.

Our observations of teachers in Island schools has led us to formulate the following policy alternatives.

POLICY 7.1

That only full trained teachers be appointed to Island schools.

The rationale for this policy is that such teaching staffs will lead to better academic standards in island schools. Support for this argument comes from Thursday Island primary school where children experience qualified Queensland primary teachers throughout their whole primary schooling, and (on the evidence of teachers at the high school), perform much better than children from island schools who have been taught by Islander teachers.

One advantage of this policy is that only trained teachers will be appointed. Furthermore, as all teachers in a school will be from the same cultural background there will be greater opportunity for rapport between principal and staff. A non-islander principal might stand a better chance of dealing with a non-islander staff member's incompetence as a professional equal than with an Islander teacher's, since the latter is seen as socially and professionally inferior.

A disadvantage of this policy is the difficulty imported teachers face in making the necessary personal and professional adjustments to island living. The task is not impossible but it takes time and a willingness to go out to native people in an effort to learn from them. Indeed the testimony of those high school teachers on Thursday Island who have achieved a fair measure of understanding of, and acceptance by, Islanders is that the process takes at least three years. Anything less than this has too much of the flavour of the expatriate conducting a foreign enterprise among native peoples.

It would appear from these requirements and the relative isolation and limited social outlets on most islands that the only likely source of recruits would be married couples. Given that the teacher's wife continues to serve as the government nurse, there is much to be said for such a pattern of recruitment. However, we feel that appointment of non-Islander teachers on secondment is unsatisfactory. This arrangement encourages them to feel that they are to do the same job in the islands as anywhere else in Queensland and frustrates them when

they encounter a whole range of unaccustomed responses - from incompetence among teachers to under-achievement among pupils. This counter-productive response is unlikely to be avoided until teachers are recruited on the basis of open advertising, and are given a substantial orientation course.

For as long as non-Islander teachers continue to be recruited for service in the region, there is a need for such a course. It would contain useful practicalities on radio maintenance and form filling. But the burden of its concern would be with the elements of cultural anthropology: an induction into some of the basic values informing Islander societies and into the general problems raised by the school as an agent of acculturation. There is now a wealth of well-attested data illustrating something of the ways in which unrecognised clashes of assumption between school and community in developing societies have produced a whole generation of educational misfits. There would also be an introductory course in Islander Pidgin. A residential summer school, to be attended by teachers and if possible their wives, for a period of, say, six weeks, could do a great deal to make the work of the imported teacher in the Torres Strait fruitful rather than frustrating.

POLICY 7.2

That non-Islander principals and Islander staffs be appointed to Island schools.

As with Policy 7.1, this one aims at maintaining a measure of uniformity of content and method with that used elsewhere in Queensland. The assumption is that the non-Islander principal's training and experience when brought to bear on Islander teachers will ensure improvement in the latter's teaching standards and a better learning by the children. But this would be conditional upon good professional rapport between principal and staff. Older teachers and trained teachers enjoyed better rapport with their principals than did the younger, untrained teachers in the schools we visited. One white principal was given to offensively tactless supervision of his young teachers. Consequently these teachers sought out the professional guidance of their older Islander colleagues in times of need. This policy therefore is dependent upon Policy 8.1 for its success. A body fully trained Islander teaching would give principals fewer opportunities to lose confidence in their staff's professional competence.

The objection to Policy 7.1 on the grounds of expatriate teachers conducting a foreign enterprise also applies here. Furthermore the policy savours of a political ploy to satisfy Islanders that at least some attempt was being made by government to provide the services of highly trained people in the area. We do not deny that the presence of some seconded principals might professionally benefit some Islander teachers and give better educational opportunities to some children.

But as a policy it seems set to keep Islander teachers for ever on an inferior professional status to non-Islander teachers and to prevent any of them who have the talent from becoming principals themselves. Given the increasing number of Islander youngsters going on with secondary schooling, even to matriculation, suitable teaching talent will, within ten or fifteen years, be knocking at the door of promotion. To keep the door locked and bolted is to starve the school children on the other side. The adoption of this policy would therefore be tantamount to a declaration that, for the foreseeable future, Islanders were not expected to be able to develop the capacities required for the exercise of headmastership. So we offer a compromise.

POLICY 7.3

That non-Islander principals and Islander staffs be appointed to Island schools for a period of ten years only.

This policy recognises that there are very few Islander teachers whose present standard of education or of training is sufficient to command the respect of impartial observers. But it also sets a clear limit to the period of dependence upon imports, and requires raising the educational standard of the homegrown product. It is all too easy to look at the present level of achievement of Islander teachers and to draw the conclusion that they are intrinsically incapable of ever attaining comparable standards of professional competence. While training is inadequate and power withheld, qualities of responsible leadership do not become evident. We know of no evidence from studies of Islander life which suggest any lack of willingness or aptitude for leadership roles, except only that the conditioning of a century has deepened the expectation that when the European is present he will by nature be better fitted to direct.

An objection to this policy is that it might incline imported principals to be less than enthusiastic about taking on the extra responsibilities for bringing their schools and teachers up to a standard of efficiency which would make the transition to Islander principalship at the end of ten years easier. Furthermore, as we have just pointed out, while the European principal is in command the Islanders will continue to want to be crew. So, provided the non-Islander principals continue to run their schools to at least their present level of efficiency, the Islanders who succeed them will have a functioning institution to take over even if their grip on the reins of leadership is initially not very secure.

POLICY 7.4

That only Islander teachers be appointed to Island schools.

This policy is based on allowing indigenous people to take full responsibility for their own welfare and advancement. It subscribes to the view that, in the matter of education, indigenous teachers possess the language facility and sensitivity to their own culture necessary for them to do a better job with

Islander children than the great majority of imported teachers can ever hope to do. They are in a position to capitalise on the present capacities and motivations of the children in the island setting to help them learn what both mainland and Islander societies have to offer them. Islander teachers are better placed than non-Islanders to deal with the identity crisis which Islander children must inevitably face as they are prepared through their schooling to enter white society (provided of course that they have been given the kind of training referred to below in Policy 8.1).

This policy has advantages for the Islander teachers themselves. Policy 8.1 aims at a fully trained Islander teaching service and, given this, Policy 7.4 would allow for teachers to enjoy equal professional status with their fellows and the possibility of better rapport with their principals. It further throws open opportunities for promotion in the service, thus providing incentives for the ambitious teacher to excel at his task.

An objection which could be levelled at this policy centres on likely standards of achievement vis-a-vis schools with non-Islander teachers. Our proposals for training (given in the Appendix) counter this objection, and there is no other reason that can plausibly be advanced for the differences in standards between government and Islander teachers than differences in education and teacher training.

Under this policy, the formative education of Islander children is likely to be well catered for. However they do have to move off their island and into high school where they will be confronted by European teachers for the first time. The transition will be rough for some children unless those teachers are of the kind we have recommended for the primary school in Policy 7.1. One hopes that eventually Islander high school teachers will take their places in the high schools of the area; not so much for the sake of increasing vocational opportunity for Islanders as for the sake of future generations of adolescents who will thereby have models of their own race with whom to identify.

POLICY 8.1

That a programme for the training of all Islander teachers be instituted forthwith, and an announcement be made that at the end of ten years no untrained teacher will be employed.

This policy aims at a fully trained Islander teaching service. The ten-year period is transitional, to allow all those who are able, to embark on and complete one of the levels of teacher training suggested in the Appendix. However it does provide for exemptions and special circumstances. The two categories of exemption, we propose, would be those over forty years of age and those who have had twenty years of teaching experience. These exemptions are not meant to discourage a number of such teachers from engaging in training, and indeed the monetary and promotion incentives will be attractive enough to encourage them. All teachers who fail to gain exemption during the ten year period should be eligible for retirement on a pension.

In the interests of a trained teaching service, this policy aims at providing graduated courses of training which will allow for variations in readiness and personal circumstances. Too often, educational and training courses do not cater for the late developer or the unmotivated to have a second attempt following initial failure or withdrawal. We feel that Islanders, engaged in or contemplating teaching as a career, need every encouragement to seek training and to raise their level of qualification by these graduated courses until fully trained.

In order that suitable inducements might encourage teachers to seek qualifications, a new salary scale for the Islander teaching service would be required. We envisage that during training students who have just left school will receive the usual Australian teacher trainee's allowance, while those from the service will be paid their base salary plus margins for dependent spouse/children. The salary scale for trained teachers could begin at appropriate levels below the current award for European teachers (who have had a full secondary education before training), and provide for attainment of equivalence when qualifications are comparable. As an example of an extension, the base level for a fully trained Islander teacher could be set at $500 to $1,000 less than that for a fully trained white teacher. This figure would be low enough to satisfy the Teachers' Union that qualified Islander teachers were receiving payment commensurate with their standards of education and training. However the Union would have to accept the principle that once an Islander teacher had attained provisional matriculation he would be entitled to the same rates of pay as a three-year trained primary school teacher anywhere else in Australia. On the other hand the fully trained Islander teacher's salary, quoted above, would be high enough to be a satisfactory alternative to unskilled labouring on the mainland so that teaching could remain his lifetime career and reward him in monetary terms for his dedication.

There can be no objection to this policy, for the concept of the untrained teacher is indefensible. Who today takes their illnesses to a barber offering to perform surgery as a sideline? Teachers too are daily dealing with a complex organism which is the human person and must regularly diagnose and remedy to enable this person to live a full satisfying life. Islander youngsters are no less human, and just as for their illnesses they rely upon the same standard of medical skill as non-Islanders do, so they are entitled to schooling at the hands of fully trained teachers.

SECONDARY TEACHERS

The Present Situation

The size of the staff at Thursday Island High School has been given in Chapter III. The majority of those teachers have come directly from a Queensland teachers college where they have completed a two-year post-Matriculation course for secondary teachers.

They are posted to Thursday Island with an encouraging assurance that they will be required to remain there for only one year of service, and that their preferences for placement in the following year will receive more than customary consideration. Some 70% to 80% therefore move each year and are replaced by another batch of new graduates. This abnormally high proportion of inexperienced staff means that many of these teachers are personally responsible for their own subjects and that moderators of the Radford Internal Assessment Scheme have to include such teachers. The principal is of course an experienced teacher. But this is invariably his first appointment as a principal and he usually transfers after two years.

There are no Islander secondary school teachers, so the day when the high school(s) of the region can be staffed by indigenous teachers is likely to be some distance away*. In societies where racial differences are of minimal emotional importance, the colour of the teacher is largely irrelevant. But in societies like Australia, where differences of colour count for a great deal, the lack of at least some teachers of the same racial group as the students is unfortunate. There is much evidence that one aspect of effective learning is a measure of emotional identification with the teacher. For an Islander student, it is very much harder to identify with a European teacher than with one of his own race. A number of the more imaginative schemes for raising levels of achievement in ghetto schools in American cities have included the recruitment and training of Negro males (there were already plenty of Negro female teachers), so that adolescent Negro boys could have before them a model of adult behaviour more representative of the values of the school system than those they met at home and on the streets.

Given that it is likely to be some years before this can be realised in the Torres Strait, and that even then there will be a need for a proportion of non-Islander teachers at the secondary level, our recommendations concentrate on the supply of persons with appropriate competencies and attitudes.

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*A handful of Islander students has gone on to Senior level and at least one has graduated from University. So in terms of suitably educated young people, a likely source of secondary teacher supply is being established. In order to induce some of these into secondary teaching, equivalent inducements to those we have outlined for primary teachers should be offered.

POLICY 9.1

That secondary school staffing be a matter for special selection, orientation and remuneration.

A newly graduated teacher is still learning to teach. There is no conceivable justification relating to his wellbeing as a teacher or to that of his students which would put him in a situation that makes constant and abnormal demands upon his professional skill and his personal resources. He is necessarily preoccupied with his own struggle to survive as a teacher, to renew his assurance that he is competent to control and to teach. There is little energy left over for attention to the problems of his students. Yet, as we have pointed out in Chapter III, the Islander student at high school is for his part living under considerable pressure as he attempts to span the two cultures and to develop a sense of identity. He needs teachers who are in no way preoccupied with their own problems, who are free to observe and counsel and unobtrusively support the adolescent in his struggle. We therefore recommend that normally no teacher be appointed to a secondary school in the region until he has completed two years of teaching service elsewhere and has a record of clear competence and enthusiasm. Subsequent to selection but before taking up his appointment he shall be required to attend the orientation course outlined earlier in this chapter (following Policy 7.1). His initial appointment will be for a period of two years with extensions readily available except in cases considered clearly unsuitable. The optimum period of service is probably somewhere between three and four years. But a demand that applicants commit themselves for such a period before they have had an opportunity to sample the situation is likely to be a substantial discouragement.

The principal likewise needs to be free of the pre occupations of learning his trade as an administrator. We therefore recommend that applications for appointment as headmaster be received only from teachers who have already proved their capacity not only to run a school with order and verve but also to counsel and encourage staff with sympathy and insight. Such a principal, largely free of a pre occupation with his own professional survival, could be expected to develop imaginatively modified programmes appropriate to the region.

Incentives are needed if people of personal quality and professional competence are to apply to work in an area as remote as the Torres Strait. We offer the following list of conditions which in varying combination are likely to attract and retain staff. The factors are listed in no special order: a comment or two is added about ways in which these might be realised in the Strait.

a) Financial return: a loading equivalent to about 10% of the salary of a trained secondary teacher is suggested.

b) Living conditions: married staff should have access to houses which do not offer their wives continual domestic frustration (the current housing shortage on Thursday Island is a matter for urgent attention).

c) Professional challenge: there is no lack of this in the region: it needs to be recognised as such not by the utterance of occasional platitudes but by encouragement to innovate and develop new programmes.

d) Opportunity for refreshment: stimulating orientation and refresher courses could be offered during the mid-year vacations in the region and during the summer at a southern university.

e) Imaginative but non-authoritarian leadership: persons who are secure in their own competence can share it rather than guard it as a means of maintaining a measure of assurance of their own superiority.

f) A share in day-to-day decision-making: this assumes a prior willingness on the part of the Education Department to acknowledge the right of the principal on the spot to make appropriate decisions - he can then share this right with his staff.

g) Ready access to those who stand in authority over him.

There are a number of thoughtful young Australians who are looking for alternatives to the urban rat-race. It would be appropriate to seek them more widely than through the pages of the public service gazette.

Finally, the crucial need for specialist teachers of music, art and physical education should not be ignored. Current regulations of the Education Department require minimum enrolments of 1000 for the appointment of a music specialist, and 600 for a specialist in physical education*. We recommend that these be modified to allow of certain schools being declared special cases, and that high schools in the Strait be so listed.

Many aspects of this problem of adequate staffing for schools in the region have implications for the decision-makers. In particular they raise the question of who ought to be making such decisions. To this issue of administrative control, the concluding chapter is devoted.

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* It is considered normal to provide an art specialist on the staff of each full high school. Thursday Island High School may have had a second manual arts specialist appointed in lieu thereof, an understandable but possibly misguided modification of the norm.

CHAPTER V

RUNNING AND ROCKING THE BOAT

The Present Situation*

Administration of education on the outer islands, as of most aspects of life on the reserve, is in the hands of the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. (For convenience, it is referred to in this report as D.A.I.A.). It is this department which appoints and pays teachers, decides on and pays for capital expenditure, and purchases most of the equipment in the schools.

There are certain points at which the Education Department of Queensland is called into the picture. The principals of the schools in Badu, Mabuiag, Yorke, Darnley and Murray Islands** are trained primary teachers recruited from the classified service of the Education Department of Queensland and seconded to serve on the reserve for a two year period each. When requests are received from schools for teaching equipment, these are referred to the Education Department for advice.

For everything else, the control and direction of the primary school system of the reserve rests with the D.A.I.A. and in particular with the manager of the reserve. Islander school principals, one suspects, find this arrangement less chafing than do government teachers who have known another regimen before they came to the region. Unfortunately, we cannot report at first hand on any of the former. Our dealings with Islander teachers in other schools lead us to think that the Islander principal, with a minimal education and a limited one year (in a few cases, two years) of training would, as compared with his European counterpart, have much less pedagogic knowledge or experience on which to base any request for change, and be much less inclined to expect that he was a person fitted to initiate it.

The five government teachers are in a different situation. And, just because of their intrusion, as it were, into the situation from outside, some aspects of their relationship with the administering authority serve to illustrate ambiguities in the whole administrative system. The brevity of the schedule of interview which serves as an orientation to their entry is likely to leave them with the impression that, given certain clearly stated restrictions on fraternisation with the Islanders, there is not a great deal of difference between the job of being a teacher in the Torres Strai and anywhere else in Queensland. Again, delays occur in any large system when principals request teaching

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* In this section is offered only a sample of the structural relationships between personnel within the system and mention of some of the problems which these raise.

** It is a little hard to see just why these islands in particular have this service. The populations of both Darnley and Yorke are substantially smaller than those of Boigu, Saibai and Yam.

equipment. These are compounded in the Strait by the necessity for the request to be referred to the Education Department and then back to the head office of D.A.I.A. in Brisbane before authorisation to purchase is given.

Nor is the principal related to the Manager's office on Thursday Island merely as an educator with specialised work to do who must report on his activities to a superior who (along with all his clerical staff) lacks expertise in education. He must also fill the role of secretary to the island council, and transmit radio messages to and fro. He is specifically charged to remain objective and uninvolved; yet inevitably, as the most educated and experienced person on the island, he is pressed for advice. Even if he manages to resist that pressure, he is liable to be squeezed between the concern of the council to press its needs and the irritation which most clerks feel when they face reminders concerning unanswered letters or unfilfilled requisitions.

This outline suggests only a few of the factors operating in the administrative sector. But it will serve as a backdrop for the alternative policies which follow.

POLICY 10.1

That the present control of the school system by D.A.I.A. be continued.

The rationale for this policy is that the department has responsibility for nearly every other major aspect of life on the islands (save only for religion). It is neater and in many ways less productive of friction to have all control centred in one authority. Decisions can be made and implemented without tension-building delays. Teachers on three islands, for example, arrange an inter-school sports tournament. Then the department can send a launch to transport two of the teams to the island of the third. Another virtue of the policy is the convenience to the Department of having in the school principal the most educated man on the island to undertake a number of administrative tasks.

The central objection to this policy is that no-one in D.A.I.A. really understands what education is all about in anything more than an amateur fashion. Yet, if this policy is adopted, this will be the authority which decides which Islander teachers will be transferred, which will get further training, which will be appointed from the waiting ranks of the unemployed and untrained. These matters are of course not currently being done on a purely haphazard basis. The opinions of Island chairman and other community leaders are sought, and the individual's reputation for sobriety and sexual abstinence therefore counts for much*.

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* Two of the most competent classroom teachers we saw on the Islands have been for some years bypassed in the annual selection of candidates for training in Brisbane - according to Island opinion because of their reputation in bed.

But as we had ample opportunity to confirm, awareness among the Island communities of the ends or the means of the educational process, is meagre to the verge of non-existence. And while no-one suggests that senior officials of D.A.I.A. are as ignorant as that, their criteria of judgement are in most cases derived from personal experience rather than professional understanding.

Since an administrative body made up of non-educators is unaware of the complex nature of the educative process, it is in no position to assess the value of a teacher's service and to mix encouragement with exhortation in appropriate proportions The result tends to be an overrating of obedient quietness and a discounting of innovatory zeal. Administrative leadership within the system seems to be based on the notion that power derives solely from formal authority (as enunciated by such theorists as Gulick and Orwick (15)). Much thinking on educational administration in recent years has emphasised that effective leadership derives more from power based on expertise and positive affect between subordinates and superordinates (i.e. referent power) (16). It is difficult to conceive how D.A.I.A. administrators can exercise leadership based on either expert power or referent power when they are unversed in educational thought and have such limited contact with the schools. The appointment of an inspector and a supervisory teacher to begin work in 1973 might well do something to correct this imbalance, though we can only speculate at this juncture on what decision-making powers they will in time be able to acquire. Their formal base is at the present rather a narrow one.

All of which suggests that a transfer of responsibility for education to some other authority may be appropriate.

POLICY 10.2

That the school system of the Islands become the responsibility of the Education Department of Queensland.

The rationale for this policy is already by implication in large part, contained in the discussion of Policy 1. As Medicine moved in the nineteenth century from being an amateur adjunct of barbering, Education in the twentieth is being recognised for what it is: a highly complex personal and social process calling for a wide range of skills, many of them far beyond the compass of even the most talented amateur. School systems ought therefore to be run by educators.

An objection which is likely to be raised against this policy is one to which we can give little support, viz. the confusion which is likely to follow a divided authority. A division of control on the islands between educational and general administration would be likely to create at the least areas of ambiguity and at the most occasions of conflict. Much of course depends upon the ultimate object of both school and administration. If they exist in order to maintain continuity and an unbroken air of orderliness, then a single authority is the best. Any awkward questions raised by teachers can be noted, acknowledged and filed away under the heading "No action taken or contemplated".

Education, like many other social processes concerned primarily with persons, depends for its vitality upon creative variation. The teacher who is not bound by the timetable is often the one who transmits his love of science or poetry or whatever to his pupils, and in so doing opens their lives not just to the fundamentals of the subject currently being taught, but to the whole world of learning*.

But even as this is written, an uncomfortable doubt nags, There are places it is true where such creative vitality is evident, where timetables are the servants of learning and not its restrictors. Sad to say, not many of them are found in Queensland. The building of open classroom primary schools may herald the beginning of a new era. But even this promising development is currently threatened by a staffing system which calls for a merry-go-round of change of dismaying frequency. Either on statistical data (such as the proportion of graduates or three-year-trained teachers in the service) or on empirical evidence from recent research (such as the teachers' attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment, their satisfaction with classroom teaching, their willingness to accept non-professional duties and their co-operation with parents),(17)Queensland ranks low. If the Torres Strait is to see educational development of the magnitude needed, a different administrative body may be appropriate.

POLICY 10.3

That the school system of the Torres Strait become the responsibility of the Commonwealth Department of Education, and that a regional director be appointed to the area with substantial executive authority.

The rationale for this change centres on the distinctive problems which the clash of cultures raises for education. An authority which is neither bound by a century of its own tradition nor preoccupied with the immensity of its task of providing for the education of a million or more mainland Australians is in a better position to take cognisance of the distinctive problems of Island schooling and to turn some of these problems into opportunities.

Teacher training is one of the first areas which needs imaginative refurbishing. The Commonwealth already has a teaching service, and arrangements for training teachers who are to serve in schools where the dominant cultural tradition is non-European. There is an urgent need to recruit competent and well qualified teachers with a clear will to serve in a demanding situation of cultural transition. There is an equally urgent need for a programme which will concertedly upgrade the education and the training of Islander teachers. The Department of Education's arrangements with the Canberra College of Advanced Education are much more likely to meet this challenge than are any of the existing programmes of teacher training in Queensland.

*We ought not to give the impression that the present administration is utterly bound to timetables. One principal applied for permission to take the last two weeks of one year from classwork so that the whole school could build a tennis court. Permission was given.

Curriculum revision is another area which needs concerted attention. An authority such as the Commonwealth is much more likely to be able to treat the Torres Strait as a special region with its own distinctive circumstances, and not just another of those awkward native reserves where everything that metropolitan schools do has to be done, but in a much watered-down version*.

The very newness of the Commonwealth's venture into this field is one of its greatest recommendations. Its officers are so much less likely to be appointed on the Peter Principle from among the tiring faithfuls who have maintained the system in the difficult days of postwar expansion. They are much less likely to be conditioned by the assumptions of that authoritarian paternalism which has been at the centre of Queensland native affairs practice for decades (18).

The first objection which seems to us to warrant consideration concerns the increased costs of administration, when the place that the buck finally comes to rest is removed a further 600 miles from Brisbane to Canberra. This disadvantage is however only relative now that the difference between a jet journey of 1360 and 1960 miles is a matter of not many moments. And a large amount of crucial decision-making these days can be done on the telephone.

But it is inherent in this proposal that a great deal of the decision-making will be made in the region, by an educator who is appointed with power to carry out agreed policies as he sees fit. This should largely eliminate the sense of remoteness which presently afflicts school principals on the islands. A request which they initiate may well have to go from their island to the Manager's office on Thursday Island, to the D.A.I.A. office in Brisbane, to the Education Department in Brisbane. Contemporary administrative theory emphasises the desirability of keeping the decision-makers as close and accessible as possible to those who have to execute the decisions - as it is sometimes expressed, "to keep the structure as flat as possible" (19). The initiator of an idea then has readier access to the decision-maker, he can be involved in discussion of the issue, he can hope for a speedy decision, and he may well be given reasons. Such a structure, it has been found, contributes much to the mental health of workers, and thence to their productive vitality (20).

A second objection is that transfer of Islander pupils to and from Queensland schools would be harder if there were a distinctive syllabus in the Islands. This is likely to be a real problem if the child is transferred during his primary schooling,

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* This contention may of course raise questions concerning the administration of other reserves on the mainland. At the point where it does so, it moves altogether beyond the province of this report, and we claim no capacity to offer comment.

though it is doubtful if transfer from an Island school to one in Cairns or Townsville is very easy today, with nominal standardisation the rule. At the secondary level, the differences in the Torres Strait are unlikely to be any greater than between one Australian state and another: indeed, it could be part of the responsibility of the new authority to minimise such differences. It is however a dangerously restrictive practice to impose uniform syllabuses on all children in a country in order to make the transfer of a small minority painless. The distinctive needs of the Torres Strait, outlined in earlier chapters of this report, call for a distinctive programme. Migration into mainland society is likely to be in the long run much more successfully undertaken by those who have made the cultural transition via a specially devised curriculum of the kind we have envisaged than by those who have had to fit a Procrustean programme devised for the school children of Brisbane.

In the chapter on primary curriculum, we noted the importance of textbook material related to the life experience of the child, and the suitability of much of the Minenda material prepared in Port Moresby. There may well be also training and other facilities which could appropriately be shared between the two regions. It might be easier for a Commonwealth department to negotiate with an independent Papua-New Guinea for such exchanges than a State authority.

APPENDIX

A GRADUATED PROGRAMME OF TEACHER TRAINING FOR ISLANDER TEACHERS

A. For New Teachers entering the Service

i) Selection will be on the basis of a tangible number of points obtained at the completion of Grade 10 level of schooling together with a recommendation from the high school principal concerning their possession of suitable personality traits. (Those with Senior passes (i.e. Grade 12) may enter one of the mainland teacher training courses for three years, but will be required to include courses on teaching indigenous people in their training programme).

ii) The qualification "Islander Primary Teachers' Certificate" will be awarded to those students who satisfactorily complete three years of training.

iii) Following a one or two year transitional course, those with the Teachers' Certificate will be eligible for provisional matriculation which will enable them to undertake external studies from a University or College of Advanced Education.

iv) Selection for the transitional course will in part depend upon performance at the annual inservice training seminars on Thursday Island.

v) Those students, who, at the conclusion of their second year of training, are not yet ready for any reason to proceed to third year, may be granted a Provisional Islander Primary Teachers' Certificate entitling them to proceed to the third year at some later date.

vi) The training programmes for all teaching qualifications awarded will include the following Course areas:

a) Educational and pedagogical studies
b) Academic subjects
c) A range of activities, excursions, events, designed to broaden the trainee's range of personal experiences
d) Islander cultural studies

B. For Untrained Teachers already in the Service

i) Selection will be on the basis of the school principal's recommendation and satisfactory performances at the annual inservice training seminars on Thursday Island.

ii) These teachers will be eligible for a Provisional Islander Teachers' Certificate at the end of two years' training and may embark on the third year programme at any time for the Islander Teachers' Certificate.

iii) Those who go on to the third year course should be exempt from some segments on the grounds that they are mature people with adult motivations who could succeed without necessarily doing all such studies. They would still sit for the third year examinations in those courses they study.

iv) Teachers who obtain the Islander Teachers' Certificate by this scheme of training will be eligible to do the transitional course for provisional matriculation.

C. For Teachers in the Service with one or two years of training

i) Selection will be as for category B above.

ii) These teachers will embark on a similar training programme to teachers in category B except that one year trained teachers will be exempt from the first year of the provisional course while two year trained teachers will be permitted to apply for special admission to the third year of the Islander Teachers' Certificate course. Failing selection for this, they will be entitled to enter the second year of this programme.

iii) These teachers will have similar opportunities to gain provisional matriculation to those of teachers in Categories A and B.

D. Kindergarten Teachers

Similar equivalent credits to those for primary school teachers will be worked out for kindergarten teachers.

E. Institution for Training

i) The choice of a suitable institute for training is an important decision. The likeliest seems to be a College of Advanced Education which already has a department of anthropological studies in it or has close links with a neighbouring university with these facilities. Its location will need to be related to whatever decision is taken regarding administrative authority (discussed in Chapter V).

ii) Within the institution a Centre for Islander Studies will be set up, and linked closely with the Department of Teacher Education. Staff will be sought with academic qualifications in cultural anthropology.

iii) The courses provided will include teacher training and further education for Islander teachers, and orientation programmes for non-Islanders intending to go to teach in the Torres Strait.

SUMMARY OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As was indicated at the beginning of the report, policies with the same initial numeral are alternatives to one another.

1.1. That Islander children be recognised as having distinctive learning needs and motivations which require identification by intensive research and treatment by modified teaching strategies.

1.2 That suitable teaching-learning programmes and techniques found useful among other ethnic minority groups be adapted for use with Islander children and adopted on the basis of how effective they are in practice.

2.1. That curriculum and teaching methods in island schools be kept as they are with no accomodation to the special needs of the island situation.

2.2 That the present curriculum and teaching methods be retained, but with some modification of content by using examples from the local situation.

2.3 That a completely new curriculum be designed taking the local environment as its starting point.

3.1 That whatever reforms in curriculum and teaching methods are made, they include the education of adults for their personal development and for their role in assisting their children to learn.

4.1 That the children be initially taught in the Islander language of their area.

4.2 That children be initially taught in Pidgin.

4.3 That English continue to be the sole medium of instruction in the school.

5.1 That all Islander children be sent away to the mainland for secondary education, divided into groups of not more than three or four to a school.

5.2 That the high school on Thursday Island be built up as a full secondary school to senior, and adequate accommodation be provided for all children from the outer islands.

5.3 That the high school at Bamaga be built up as a full secondary school to Senior, and adequate accommodation be provided for all children from the outer islands.

5.4 That community high schools be set up on three or four of the islands: children who attend them to come from the common language area, and be accommodated in the homes of Islander families.

6.1 That there be appointed to the Education authority of the region, a team of professionally qualified counsellors.

7.1 That only fully trained teachers be appointed to Island schools.

7.2 That non-Islander principals and Islander staffs be appointed to Island schools.

7.3 That non-Islander principals and Islander staffs be appointed to Island schools for a period of ten years only.

7.4 That only Islander teachers be appointed to Island schools.

8.1 That a programme for the training of all Islander teachers be instituted forthwith, and an announcement be made that at the end of ten years no untrained teachers will be employed.

9.1 That the staffing of the high school be a matter for special selection, orientation and remuneration.

10.1 That the present control of the school system by D.A.I.A. be continued.

10.2 That the school system become the responsibility of the Education Department of Queensland.

10.3 That the school system become the responsibility of the Commonwealth Department of Education, and that a regional director be appointed to the area with substantial executive authority.

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